







J. Almond  
1898









S. ADELRED



LIVES  
OF  
THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

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St. Aelred,  
ABBOT OF RIEVAUX.

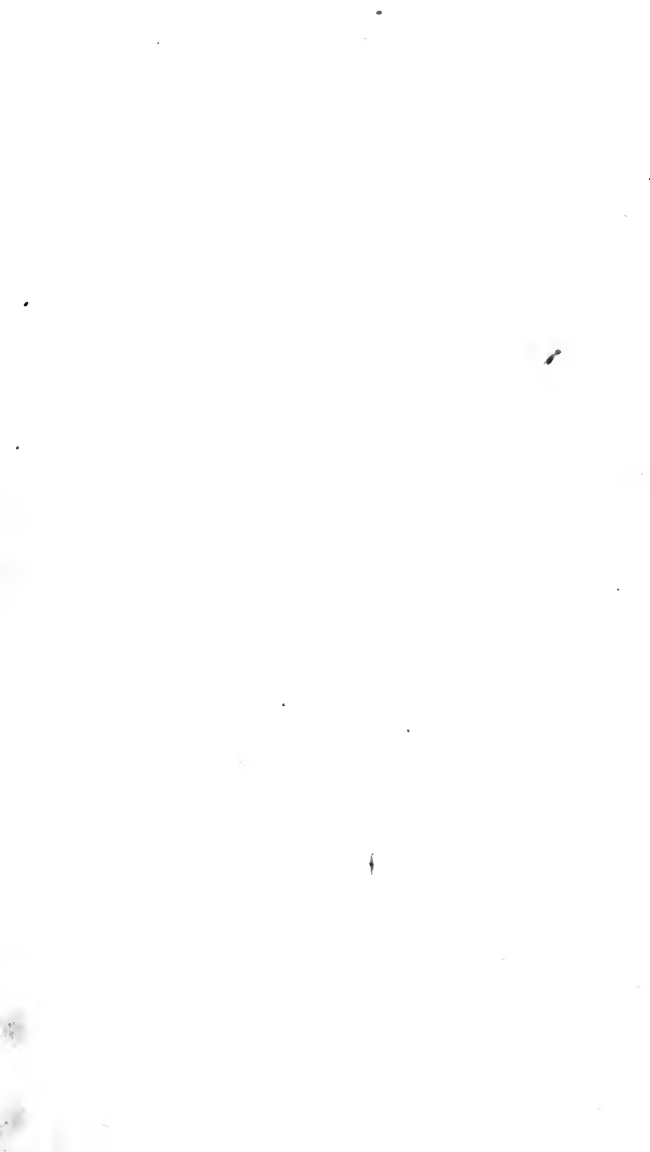
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MANSUETI HÆREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

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1845.



## CONTENTS.

Chap.		Page
	PREFACE . . . . .	v
1.	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
	THE OLD MONASTERY . . . . .	6
2.	THE REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND . . . . .	16
3.	THE STRUGGLE . . . . .	36
4.	THE BATTLE OF THE STANDARD . . . . .	54
5.	THE CISTERCIAN NOVICE . . . . .	63
6.	THE SPIRIT OF CITEAUX . . . . .	79
7.	THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH . . . . .	88
8.	THE CISTERCIAN ABBOT . . . . .	104
9.	CISTERCIAN TEACHING . . . . .	127





## ADVERTISEMENT.

OUR knowledge of St. Ninian is chiefly owing to the Life of him by St. Aelred, which has been principally followed in these pages. Its genuineness was, indeed, questioned by the Bollandists, but apparently without any reason. It has been uniformly referred to as St. Aelred's by a long chain of English writers, nor is there any other known as such. The copy in the Bodleian Library is part of a M.S. (Laud 668) containing works undoubtedly his, which was written within twenty years after his death; and one in the British Museum (M.S.S. Cotton. Tib. D. 3.), of the close of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century, distinctly attributes the authorship to him. The chief reason assigned by the Bollandists for doubting its genuineness is, that the opening words of their copy, which they do not quote, are not the same as those given by Pitseus as St. Aelred's. His words are "Multo-

rum bonorum virorum.” Those at the beginning of the Prologus in our M.S.S. are “Multis virorum sapientium.” The difference is so slight that it would seem most probable, and from other considerations it is almost certain, that the person who made the copy for the Bollandists, overlooked, as he might easily do, the Prologus, and began with the Life, of which the first words are, “Gloriosissimam beati Niniani;” since in other respects their M.S. appears to have been the same as ours.

The Service for St. Ninian’s Day, from the Aberdeen Breviary, was not seen until this Life had nearly passed through the press. The historical references coincide almost entirely with what had been written, being derived for the most part from St. Aelred’s Life. The only points which call for notice are, that the words “patriæ pater genuit patronum,” which occur in a Responsary, look as if the Saint was considered to be a native of Galloway; and that the “brother,” mentioned as the companion of his journeying, is called “collega,” as if he had been a brother of his monastery, not a relation.

LIFE OF

**St. Aelred.**

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CHAPTER I.

*Introduction.*

It is often said that things look on paper or on canvass very different from what they are in reality ; how often is the traveller disappointed, on arriving at a spot of which he had read in poetry, or seen portrayed by a painter. We repeat over and over again to ourselves that it is beautiful, as if to persuade ourselves of it, and yet there is something wanting ; after all, we have seen woods as green, and streams as clear, and rocks as wild, and the ruined tower that looks over the stream is but a very poor ruin, as the baron who lived there was probably a very indifferent character. And yet were the poet or the painter so unfaithful as we suppose ? They saw it under some particular aspect, when the sun was upon it, or when the woods were coloured by autumn, and they caught it at some moment when one of Nature's endless combinations had made it look more than usually lovely. No two persons see the same scene under the same aspect ; it will not look to-morrow as it does now, and yet it is the same sun, and

the same trees, and the same river. And so it is with history ; the historian must colour his work with his own mind ; it is his view of facts, and yet it may nevertheless be true. Nay, in some respects it is more true than the view which a contemporary might take of them. Kings and queens are doubtless very different from the ermine-covered things which we think them to be, and we must make them objects of the intellect before we can judge of them ; just as a surgeon must in a manner forget that he is operating on flesh and blood, before he can do his duty. Besides which the ideas that contemporaries have of the men of their day, are after all only theories ; they are but approximations to the truth ; events and actions are but exponents of the inward life of men and nations, and none on earth can judge them precisely as they are. We have in this sense only a *view* of our dearest friends, and yet it does not follow that we love an abstraction or an idea. And so it by no means follows that history is untrue because it is the view of the historian ; it is coloured of course by his character and his opinions. The facts of history want an interpretation and are utterly meaningless, like an unknown language, until they are viewed in relation to each other and with the whole period to which they belong. This is what the historian supplies ; his view may be true or false, but all views are not false, because they are partly subjective. All views are not true, for that would in fact be saying that all are false, but some are right and others are wrong, and that, though the facts related are given with equal honesty ; just as in physical science experiments are the same, but the true explanation of them is the simplest formula which will take in all their results.

All this eminently applies to the lives of the blessed

Saints, because the view which we have of them is in all cases coloured by the reverence of the Christian world, and yet it is by no means falsified. It is history with the perpetual interpretation of Christendom ; the mind of the Church acting upon facts in the life of one of her children. It may be quite true that in many instances false miracles or actions which may be proved never to have taken place, may have been ascribed to them. An unknown monk in some obscure monastery may have written a life of a Saint, merely putting together all the traditions which remained of him, without caring to separate the true from the false ; but still the result of the whole may be true ; and the general aspect in which Christendom views the Saint may be the right one, though some particular stories may be false. How few in many instances are the facts known about some of the Saints in the middle ages. Their parentage is often forgotten, and the history of their early years unknown ; or perhaps the names of their parents are preserved with the vague and suspicious addition that they were of very noble birth. Some few great deeds are on record, but the internal struggles which led to them are all forgotten ; all at once they appear before us as perfect Saints, as if no discipline had been required to form them. We are left to eke out the scanty materials of their lives with what we know must have happened, from the character of the times and from the manners of the age. And yet perhaps we should hardly regret this ; the picture of a Saint with the aureole round his head and the meek expression of joy on his features, may be unlike what he was in his lifetime, and yet it may be the more like what he is in heaven now. And after all, if we had come close to him, a real living Saint, should we have

understood him ? If we had lived with St. Basil, might we not have been tempted to look upon him as a peevish invalid, to think him an austere man, or oversensitive, or too methodical, and apt to care about trifles ? Many a holy Abbot must have appeared cross to a lazy monk. We cannot enter into God's Saints upon earth ; even if we stand by their side, we could only make an approximation to the truth, as we do now. This is the case with Saints in scripture. How little has it pleased the Holy Spirit to disclose of their hidden life, just as much of course as we can bear, and as was needful for His Church, and yet how little ! Which of the Saints is there that we can picture vividly to ourselves ? In the case of the blessed Virgin indeed, the Church has marvellously filled up the outline of Scripture ; of her we know one fact, that she was the Mother of God, and the delicate sense, so to speak, of the Christian mind, has found out that this must necessarily involve much more than appears on the surface of Scripture. The Church has so long dwelt in love on our ever-blessed Lord in His infancy, that we almost fancy that we can "come into the house and see the young child with Mary His mother." This may also be the case with St. Paul, who has left so completely the impress of his mind, on his writings, but it is hardly so with any other Saint. St. Mary may be said to live in Christian doctrine ; St. Paul in the Holy Scriptures ; but the other great Saints connected with our Lord have their life in Christian tradition. Even St. John we think of, not as the old man with the golden mitre, but as ever young and beautiful as we have been used to see him in ecclesiastical pictures and sculptures.

All this may perhaps reconcile us to much that is

disappointing from the paucity of materials in the life of Aelred. And yet his life is such an important one, from his being the Cistercian Saint of England, a sort of English St. Bernard, as he is called by his contemporaries, that he seems to deserve that every effort should be made to put forward the little that is known with due prominence. All that can now be done is to interpret the few facts that remain by making him, what he really was, the representative of the internal system of the Cistercian order in England. Facts taken by themselves prove nothing, and to suppose that any real knowledge of by-gone times can be obtained from the bare enumeration of them, is the same error as it would be to suppose that all our knowledge comes to us from experience. Without the light thrown upon them by the cross, the events of the world are the mere stirrings of the sick and disordered life of humanity ; even the lives of Saints are the mere developments of a highly moral man, as the actions of a hero are the development of a great man. If a Christian theory does not interpret the lives of Saints, a Pantheistic one will come in its stead. So we will attempt to show what Aelred was, by showing in what relation the system of which he was the head stood to the world and to the church of the period. As in the life of St. Stephen the external life of the Cistercians was described, so we will attempt now to show what was their inward life, and to bring it out in contrast, not only with the troubled world around, but with that of the leading ecclesiastics of the time. It will then be seen how the cloister was the remedy provided by God for keeping up the contemplative life amidst the busy and distracting scenes in which ecclesiastics were obliged to take part. It is easy to do this

in the case of Aelred, because we have a most complete insight into his religious character from his writings ; and because as he himself is the historian of much that is related, we are only endeavouring to look upon the troubled scene without the cloister as he did himself. And all this it is hoped may reconcile us to the scantiness of facts about himself, and also to the long digressions which such a plan involves ; for it is impossible to give an idea of the work in which he was engaged without pointing out what were the wants of the Church of the period. Besides which we cannot gain a correct view of the middle ages from the lives of Saints alone. They had their good and bad points, like other ages ; and in order to understand the twelfth century, the world and the cloister must be shown in opposition. Thus, though the cloister of Rievaulx will be the central point of the whole, the reader will not be surprised to find himself sometimes on the banks of the Rhine, or beyond the Alps, or to hear the din of border warfare breaking on the peace of the monastery. Though from the fewness of materials, we only catch glimpses of Aelred at intervals, still we will do our best to draw a truthful picture of him, at once the Saint of England and of Scotland, once well known from the Frith of Forth to the banks of the Tine and the Tees, the man of peace in the midst of barbarian war.

### *The Old Monastery.*

In the beginning of the reign of Henry I. the ancient monastery of Hexham was in a miserable state. Its three Churches were in ruins, and the vast



monastic buildings were desolate ; for ever since the Danes had sacked and plundered it, there had been no monks to dwell there.<sup>1</sup> One chaplain alone, a married priest, lived there with his family, a careless and indifferent man, with one strong feeling in his soul, and that was a love of the old royal line of England, and a hatred of the Normans. The circumstances which led to his dwelling thus with his children, in the midst of the ruinous Abbey buildings, make up a long tale of mingled good and evil. He was apparently one of a priestly race ; for his grandfather and father were priests before him. His grandfather, Alured, the son of Weston, was a good and a learned man. He used to go about through the North, repairing the ancient places which the devastation caused by the Danes had laid waste. One day, there came to him a man who dwelt at Hexham. He told him that an old man dressed in pontifical garments had appeared to him in a dream, and had bidden him go to Alured, and command him to come to Hexham, and search for the relics of the Saints which were buried there. Alured bethought himself awhile, whether this dream were worth attending to ; but he looked at the man who had brought him the news, and felt that they were true. He was a plain man, one of the inferior nobility of the realm,<sup>2</sup> and one who had had in his

<sup>1</sup> Post desolationem Nordhymbrorum quam, irrudentibus in Angliam Danis, miserabiliter incurrit, sicut cætera hujus ecclesiæ, hæc Hagulstadensis, ut verbis propheticiis utar, multo tempore sine sacerdote, sine ephod, sine teraphim gemebunda resedit. Quicquid de lignis fuerat, ignis absumpsit, bibliotheca illa nobilissima quam præsul sanctus condiderat tota deperit. MS. Bodl.

<sup>2</sup> Vir quidam de minoris ordinis proceribus. Ibid.

rough life far more to do with the lance than with the psalter. He thought, therefore, that he might be trusted, and went with him to Hexham. They travelled through St. Cuthbert's domain, and came to Tynedale, a wasted and depopulated country, and when they came to Hexham, the miserable inhabitants of the place gathered about them, to see what they were doing amongst the ruins. When they heard their errand, the poor people caught their enthusiasm, and brought spades, and set to work to help them. From dawn of day they searched till mid-day came, and they found nothing ; they searched as men look for treasure, for the names of Acca and Eata, the ancient Saints of Hexham, whose bodies they hoped to find, were known as household words in the hut of every peasant of Northumberland. They who have no friends on earth, naturally look about them for friends in heaven, and in the midst of their wasted and depopulated fields, they bethought themselves of those who originally reclaimed the country from heathenism. And now they worked on, for they hoped to see before evening fell, and to touch, their sacred relics ; but the day was far advanced, and they had found nothing, and in their disappointment they began to laugh at Alured, for having come all the way from Durham on a fool's errand. But his enthusiasm did not cool, and he rose up, and taking a mattock, went to the porch of the Church, and struck it deep into the ground, saying that there were the holy Bishops buried. So the people set to work again, and by and bye they came to two stone coffins, and there lay the bodies of the Saints, waiting for a blessed resurrection, clad in their pontifical robes, which time had not impaired. And all that night they watched about

them with chanting and prayer, and the next day they placed them in a shrine on the south side of the Church, near the sacristy. Time went on, and the Conqueror ruled in England, and another storm of war had depopulated Tynedale. Other lords possessed the land, who had never heard of the holy Bishops of Hexham. But cruel as was the rule of the new possessors of the soil, yet they brought reformation with them. The Norman Bishop of Durham, William of St. Carilefe, loved not the lazy canons, who, without submitting to any rule whatever, lived on the broad lands which stretched from the Tine to the Tees. They were but poor representatives of St. Cuthbert, those thriftless canons, and it was well to remove them. They had the option of becoming monks if they pleased, and provision was made for them if they chose still to be secular.<sup>1</sup> One alone, the dean, was persuaded by his son, a monk, to remain and take the vows; the others all remained in the world. There was one among them who disdained to receive anything at Norman hands, and this was the son of Alured. The royal family of England was in exile; English prelates and abbots were compelled to make room for foreigners; he himself and his brethren were

<sup>1</sup> Successit Walchero Guillelmus habitu monachus, qui clericos ab ecclesia Dunelmensi eliminans monachos subrogavit, et aliis quidem possessiones extra ecclesiam ordinavit, alios id suscipere contemnentes expellere non cunctavit. Intra quos prædicti Aluredi filius qui cæteris præerat, cum nihil ab episcopo suscipere dignaretur, adiit venerabilem archiepiscopum Thomam qui primus Normannorum rexit ecclesiam Eboracensem rogans ut ei Hagulstundensem ecclesiam daret ædificandam.—It does not appear what “qui præerat” means, for the dean became a monk of the new monastery. Simeon Dunelm. b. iv. 3.

turned out of their house at Durham, and he disdained to be a pensioner of the stranger. So he bethought himself of Hexham, the seat of the old Saxon bishops, and went there to hide his head till better times came. And, indeed, there were rumours of war in the North, and the king of Scotland might still make a fight for St. Edward's line, though Edgar the Atheling had submitted to the Conqueror, and was soon to assume the cross under Robert, William's eldest son. So away went Eillan, for such was his name, to Hexham. The Bishop, who seems to have been indulgent to the refractory canons, gave him his sanction, though, indeed, Eillan need have been in no dread of a rival, for his new dwelling was a sad scene of desolation. The country around was still bleeding from the vengeance of the Conqueror and the Scot, and in the midst of the deserted fields arose the ruined Abbey itself.<sup>1</sup> Its Church was half unroofed, and the rain and the snow forced a ready entrance through the gaps in the tiles; the tessellated pavement was in many places torn up, the windows were dashed in, and the high columns were covered with green moss, and with damp, which was rapidly eating away the frescoes on the walls, and on the arch which divided the nave from the choir.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Veniens ad locum homo invenit omnia desolata, muros ecclesiæ sine tegmine sordere feno, silvis supercrescentibus horrere, litura imbris et tempestate dejecta, nihil pristini retinuisse decoris. Erat autem talis terræ illius desolatio ut fere biennio ex solo venatu et aucupio se sum, que familiam sustineret.* So well was the remembrance of the family kept at Hexham, that there was not long ago, and may be still, a street in Hexham called Eilan's street.

<sup>2</sup> *Arcum sanctuarii historiis et imaginibus et variis cælaturarum figuris—decoravit.* Rich. Hagulst. de statu eccl. c. 3.

Amidst these ruins lived the family of the Saxon priest ; the Abbey lands were amply sufficient for their maintenance, but there were no corn-fields around, and no vassals to till them ; so they lived on hunting and hawking for two years after their arrival, and in the thick woods around them, many a wild deer was aroused by the horns and the hounds of the Saxons. Not long after they came there, the Abbey lands were given to a Norman, by Gerard, Archbishop of York, and this of course did not make Eillan love the strangers a whit more. He was allowed to continue there as chaplain, and a large part of the proceeds still came to him. After his death, his son, also called Eillan, the priest whom we have seen at Hexham, succeeded his father. He found himself heir to the ruined Abbey, and he inherited too the feelings and prejudices of his family, the love for Hexham and its Saints, and for the old royal line of England, and probably, no great good-will to the Norman rulers, ecclesiastical or civil. But it is said of him that he was “a sinner, and that he lived as he ought not to have done.”<sup>1</sup> What this means is not known, but it is probable that he was of the jovial race of hunting priests, who knew more about the winding of horns and the cheering of hounds than about Gregorian chants ; for these unsacerdotal accomplishments were but too common among the Saxon clergy of the time. This was

<sup>1</sup> Qui, licet peccator secus quam oportuit vixerit—ecclesias, tamen Christi renovandas ornandas serviendas devotum se et sollicitum exhibebat.—MS. Bodl. From the same manuscript it appears, in the dedication of his life of St. Bridget, that Lawrence, Abbot of Westminster, knew Eillan, and received from him the original life, which being “semi-barbara,” he polished up and made “Latinissima.”

not a promising character for the father of a Saint, and yet Eillan had three sons, one of whom was Aelred,<sup>1</sup> and a daughter, who became a holy recluse.

The present is not the first time in the annals of England that her monastic system has been extinct ; at least it was so in the north at the period of which we write ; and in the south the spirit of monks seems to have well-nigh disappeared, though there were still vast Abbeys, flourishing in worldly wealth. But their Abbots were often men frank-hearted and generous, yet with far more of the noble lord about them than of the churchman. A type of them was the high-spirited Abbot of St. Alban's, who disdained to submit to the Conqueror, and left his Abbey for the fastnesses of Ely, where Hereward was still fighting for the old royal line of England. In the North, however, monastic life was fairly extinct, and if by chance a stray monk, in the black Benedictine habit, was seen north of the Humber, men stared at his cowl and shaven crown as they would at the strange dress of a foreigner.<sup>2</sup> Aelred, then, was born amid the very ruins of the ancient monasticism of the North. Instead of the green banks where grew primroses and violets, the first place where his little feet would naturally take him, would be the ruined nave of the old church, with its mysterious side chapels ; and there were beautiful faces of Saints peering out upon him, amidst the damp green moss which

<sup>1</sup> The common date for the birth of St. Aelred is 1109. The evidence of this depends on the date assigned for his death in the life of him, given in the Bollandists, which says that he died in 1166, in his fifty-seventh year.

<sup>2</sup> Simeon Dunelm. in. ann. 1074.

was struggling with the bright colours of the frescoes. And he would first hear of St. Wilfrid, the founder of Hexham, though his relics were far away at Canterbury, for it was he who traced the pictures on the walls, to instruct the barbarous people whom he had to teach.<sup>1</sup> He would hear, too, of Acca, the successor of St. Wilfrid, the friend of Bede, for though his name was almost forgotten in the ecclesiastical calendar, the peasants knew his shrine, and every little child could tell where the relics of the holy Bishop lay.<sup>2</sup> His first play-ground would be the ruined cloisters of the Abbey, where the crosses still marked the graves of the old monks. And the stories which he heard were of the good St. Edward, with tales of King Alfred's wars and of Edmund Ironside.

He was not many years old when a change took place at Hexham, which took away some portion of its desolateness. His father had a brother, a religious and devout man, who was grieved at seeing the possessions of the church thus turned into a family inheritance, and by his persuasion, Eillan was induced to apply to the Archbishop of York for some canons to serve as a germ for the future restoration of the community. Conscious as he was of his own disorderly life, he still loved the Abbey, and had done his best to clear away the rubbish from the Church, and to repair the most

<sup>1</sup> Verum ubi eam beatissimus præsul Wilfridus, adductis secum ex partibus transmarinis artificibus, miro lapideo tabulatu ut in præsentiarum cernitis, renovavit, et ad devotionem rudis adhuc plebis conciliandam picturis et cælaturis multifariam decoravit. MS. Bodl.

<sup>2</sup> Nam ante translationem multis annis cum adhuc puerulus essem Accam, Alchmundum, Fredenbertum, Tilbertum ibi simul requiescere nihil hæsitans populus totus clamabat. Ibid.

ruined portions. It was probably connected in his mind with the old glories of England ; there is a strange connexion between loyalty for an exiled royal family and religion. The devotional feeling is often merely hereditary as well as the loyalty ; yet it is true that the party of a dethroned monarch is generally also that of religion. In this way, probably, did Eillan love Hexham and wish for its restoration ; still his disinterestedness did not carry him so far as to give up one jot of his personal rights over the Abbey lands. So poor were the canons that they often found it very hard to live on the poor remnant of their property ;<sup>1</sup> and yet Eillan showed no inclination whatever to better their condition. However the canons were there, and Aelred could not wander about the old Abbey-buildings without seeing them, and hearing them chant the service. Monks and monkish men are always good friends with children, and doubtless the fair-haired Saxon boy soon made their acquaintance. He was a happy boy, running wherever he pleased about the old Church and Abbey ; and it may have been the remembrance of his curious old home on the banks of the Tine, and of his holy childhood, which made him dwell with peculiar joy on the infancy and childhood of our blessed Lord, in after-times, when, after many a hard struggle, he had gained another home, even more peaceful and secluded. Strange, indeed, it is, when by dint of fighting and hard blows we have been moulded into that character which in substance is to be ours for all eternity, to look back upon the time of our malle-

<sup>1</sup> Curam parochiæ cum maxima parte beneficiorum—de ipsis canonicis longo tempore tenuit.—Richard of Hexham, de stat. eccl. Hag. 2. 8.



able and plastic childhood. How little often can we remember of it ! A mazy dream of sicknesses, and pains all coloured by the scenes in which our lot was cast, the sounding sea or the watery meadows, or the high mountains.

So small a portion of Aelred's life was spent there, that his chroniclers have forgotten it. An obscure charter found in Richard of Hexham incidentally preserves the memory of it. And yet these years of his childhood had much influence on his future life ; the chant of the canons remained as an undersong amidst all the festivities and the tournaments of a king's court ; for this is the next scene in which we find him.<sup>1</sup> When he quitted his home at Hexham, Aelred became the playmate of a prince's son. David, the brother of Alexander, king of Scotland, and heir apparent to the throne, took him into his family and brought him up with his son Henry. David had left his country in early life, and had preferred the court of his brother-in-law, Henry I. of England, to the chance of succeeding to the turbulent throne of Scotland. He had married the daughter of earl Waltheof, who had fallen a victim to the resentment of the Conqueror, and who was regarded as a martyr of the Saxon cause. His mother was Saint Margaret, the sister of Edgar Atheling. Add to which, besides the two earldoms which he possessed, Huntingdon and Northampton, he had also a claim upon Northumberland<sup>2</sup> in right of his wife, who was

<sup>1</sup> " Ab ipsis incunabalis," says Aelred, " cum Henrico vixi." De gen. Reg. Angl. ap. Twysden, vol. i. 368.

<sup>2</sup> David claimed Northumberland for his son Henry on this ground. Fordun, v. 42.

descended from the old earls of the county. He would thus be naturally brought to Hexham, the spiritual capital of Northumberland ; and its staunch old Saxon priest would be sure to attract the notice of a descendant of Saint Margaret. Another circumstance would draw him towards the little Aelred ; his first child had perished in his infancy by a terrible accident,<sup>1</sup> and Henry, his son, was left without a companion, for David never had any other male children. The beauty of the Saxon boy struck him, and he determined to bring him up with his son, for his daughters, Clarice and Hodierna, could be no mates for the high-spirited boy, who in after life was called Henry the heroic. Henry was a devout and good prince, and even when he grew older and was a soldier in the camp, was said to be like a young monk. But there was another boy of more congenial tastes to Aelred, and that was Waltheof, the son of David's queen by her former husband ; but of him more by and bye.

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### *The Reformation in Scotland.*

#### CHAPTER II.

WHO could have in the whole world better prospects than Aelred ? The courts of England and Scotland were opening upon him ; a rich heiress with a noble fief, or, if he preferred the church, a mitred abbacy would have been reasonable objects of a laudable ambition. But here we must pause and while Aelred is

<sup>1</sup> Orderic Vital. Ecc. Hist. 8. in ann. 1092.

growing up in David's family, take a look at the state of politics in the north. The kingdom of Scotland, I had almost said the church, was in process of formation. It was Aelred's destiny to be thrown among the ruins of a state of things passed away ; by and bye he will assist in the raising up of a new system ; but we must first learn what were the wild and unruly elements among which his lot was cast. Alas ! for Scotland. How was it ever to become like a Christian kingdom ? Its hierarchy was as yet unformed ; it had been cast out of the stream of European civilization, and its communications with the Christian world were but few and far between. The sixth century is a long way off from the twelfth ; and it was in that early time that a voice was heard going through the western isles and the wild coasts of Argyle, proclaiming peace on earth, good-will towards men. The good news spread across to the mainland, from Oban, down by the banks of Loch Awe, even to the wild head-land of Cantyre ; and the savage people were turned to the faith of Christ. It was then that in the north arose Iona, or Icolmkill, Columba's cell, and the kings of Norway, of Scotland, and of the Isles, chose to lie around the shrine of St. Columba, while in the south among the Picts, St. Ninian had founded Whiterne. Still it is quite true that Christianity never seized upon the hearts of the people as it did in the south ; it was a hard task indeed to penetrate through all the wild glens, the winding lakes, and the forests of pine which lie among those savage mountains, but this it did accomplish ; what it did not do was to bend the stubborn heart, the rough and disputatious temper of the men. There was something forbidding in the original Scottish monks : they did not

seize on the hearts of the people. They never succeeded in extinguishing hatred between rival races, and while England was one kingdom at the Norman conquest, Scotland had not even a right to one name ; it was Pictland as well as Scotland, and there was in the north beyond the Grampians, still the Gael, the wild and untamed savage of the north. Scotland was really only Argyleshire and the Isles ; the country beneath, from the two Friths, that is, the Lothians and Strathclyde, belonged to England ; while Galloway, with its savage Picts, was a debateable land, ground down between both. Christianity had not drawn together the hearts of the savage chieftains ; and what was worse, it had not succeeded in purifying their vices ; among no nation, calling itself Christian, was the sanctity of marriage so little respected as among the Picts and Scots.<sup>1</sup>

Alas ! for Scotland. By the time of the Norman Conquest, the work of St. Columba and St. Ninian was undone. Whiterne had no bishop ; he had long ago been driven away in some of the cruel and constant wars which raged in the country. In Scotland, the bishopric of St. Andrew's was still standing. But all was in a miserable state ; there too monasticism had disappeared ; the far-famed Culdees were a set of degenerate priests ; they had given up their original rule, and had wives and children ; and it is said of them that they hardly ever celebrated mass at St. Andrew's altar, except when the king came to see them.<sup>2</sup> In this state of things, it was well for Scotland that, by God's will, its kings became feudal vassals of England. Feudalism, instead of being as has been

<sup>1</sup> See St. Aelred's Life in the Bollandists.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton, Enquiry, Appendix, p. 462.

supposed, the partition of a territory, among many lords, was in reality the binding of a number of disjointed communities into one. The independent patriarchal chieftain who did homage to his conqueror and received back his lands from him, was bound on pain of forfeiting them, to assist his suzerain whenever he required his services ; and the feudal head thus became the centre of a number of before disjointed hordes.<sup>1</sup> But feudalism also contained another principle, and that was, that within his own territory each lord was absolute ; his suzerain could not interfere with his jurisdiction ; infangthief and outfangthief implied a very perfect and intelligible power of hanging and imprisoning as he pleased. This of course varied with the real power of the suzerain : in proportion as he was strong, his vassals were less independent ; thus, for instance, the great vassals of the French king were much more like independent chieftains than an English earl under the Conqueror or Henry II. In the case of Scotland, the king, while he became the vassal of the English crown, strengthened his authority at home. He became himself a feudal superior over his people, instead of a patriarchal chieftain with limited powers. Besides which the English king made him the feudal lord of Cumbria, which included not only the modern shires of Renfrew and Lanark, but “merry Carlisle” also, and the whole of Cumberland, to be held as a fief from himself. And the very dependent relation in which he placed himself was perhaps more useful to himself

<sup>1</sup> Those who know Sir Francis Palgrave’s great work on the Anglo-Saxon Constitution, will see at once how much the author is indebted to him for pointing out the relation which existed between England and Scotland, and throughout this chapter.

and his people in another way. It made him a portion of the great European body, and brought them into contact with the rest of Christendom.

The Norman Conquest indirectly still further improved Scotland. Malcolm Canmore, an intelligent and upright prince, was then on the throne. He had been driven into exile by Macbeth, the murderer of his father, and had lived for fourteen years in king Edward's court; here he had learned a lesson which he did not forget when he returned to his own wild and troubled home in the north. He had learned what was the meaning of a feudal king, not only the leader in war of a savage horde, with whom he was the common proprietor of a certain number of streams and mountains, but the lord of the soil, the dispenser of justice, according to determinate forms. He had had before him also a model of devotion, chastity, and justice in the saintly Edward. He had seen also there Margaret, a Saxon maiden, then a child of ten years old, and the neice of the Confessor, in whose veins flowed the blood of the royal house of England, and the imperial line of Germany;<sup>1</sup> and when he came back to his desolate palace of Dunfermline, surrounded by wars abroad and treachery within, he still thought of the holy family which he had seen in his exile at Westminster. After many years news came to Scot-

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm was fourteen years in Edward's court; he left it at the latter end of the year 1056, the very year in which Margaret came back from Hungary. Comp. Fordun, lib. v. c. 7, 11, 16. Orderic, as Sir F. Palgrave has observed, says that St. Edward betrothed Margaret to Malcolm. This appears inconsistent however with Turgot's narrative, if Fordun gives it rightly; for he seems to imply that Edgar betrothed his sister to Malcolm.

land that St. Edward was dead, and that Harold had seized on the throne ; and next that a great battle had been fought, and that the Normans ruled in England. Malcolm at once armed his powers in favour of Edgar, and of the line of St. Edward ; but the Conqueror was too strong for him, and his country was invaded, and he himself compelled to submit. What in the meanwhile was become of Margaret ? One day, Malcolm was sitting in his palace of Dunfermline ; the wind had been blowing fiercely, and news was brought him that a large ship had been driven by stress of weather into the bay. He sent down to the shore some of his nobles to see where the strange ship had come from ; then they brought him word that they had seen a man of princely bearing disembark with two maidens, one taller than the other, and of surpassing beauty. Malcolm sent for them, and found to his joy that they were the exiled family of England, whom God had thus directed to his land. Poor Margaret ! she had looked with terror at the high mountains and rugged rocks of the land on which they had been cast, and with still more terror at the wild looks of the nobles, who had come to gaze upon them ; but she now thanked God who sent to them a protector who loved the memory of St. Edward. Not long after, Malcolm begged of Edgar to bestow upon him the hand of his sister, and Margaret became queen of Scotland. It was by God's good providence that the line of St. Edward was planted afresh in Scotland ; it was providential too that Margaret was chosen at this special time to be queen of Scotland, for it was a turning-point in the history of the country, and Margaret became its reformer.

What could a poor foreign maiden do on such a

throne ? amidst a court, where the utmost depravity prevailed, and the wild nobles swore unchristian oaths in the presence of their queen. The very loneliness, and the distance from her country, was enough to appal the heart of a maiden ; and the rude rafters and comfortless halls, and the windy passages of an old northern palace, were in themselves sufficient to weigh down with its gloom the heart of a female, brought up in the palace of Westminster. What then could Margaret do ? with what sceptre could she sway her unruly court ? and yet she did reform Scotland, and that too, church and state. And if any one asks how she could do this, I will tell him how another queen did not do it. There once came to Scotland, from a foreign court, a queen, like Margaret, of surpassing beauty, of strong affections, and of a cheerful disposition, loving to make all happy about her. But with all her advantages, Mary did not win the hearts of the people, nor reform the wickedness of her nobles, and her reign ruined all that was left of the Church. It is only when, after long years of penitence, she died on the scaffold, confessing her faith, that we can look with complacency on Mary. But the strength of Margaret lay in her being a saint. It is true she was what is called a clever woman ; she knew Latin, and rejoiced in conversing with the learned men of the realm. But cleverness is not enough to effect a reform in a barbarous nation. She had that indescribable tact by which saints know how to manage those about them, and to do almost unconsciously just what they ought. A cold dignity might have awed, but could not have won over the nobles of her unruly court. But Margaret had a well-spring of quiet happiness in her heart which made her smile on all around her. Her



happy cheerfulness was like the purple light which throws a warm tint on the cold mountain snow. In her saintly uprightness she could afford to be amiable without losing her dignity ; and no one durst venture before her on an evil jest, for she had a strange power in her presence which rendered it impossible. The refractory warriors who frequented her husband's table would not wait till grace was said, and she won them to submission by sending round a cup of choice wine to be given to those who remained, and it was still in after-times called the grace-cup, or St. Margaret's cup. Her character had so endeared her to her husband, that she possessed an unbounded influence over him. His was no weak and easily compliant mind, and yet she converted him to habits of devotion and piety, which were rare indeed among the wild warriors of the twelfth century. He allowed her as much money as she would to distribute among the poor, and with his own royal hands helped her every day to feed the multitudes whom she served within the palace. With her he washed the feet of the poor ; nay, so completely did he allow her to give herself up to the boundless love of Christ's poor ones that continually welled from her heart, that he permitted her to bring impure lepers into their common chamber and kiss their sores. He knew well that it was no weak or fanatical devotion which made her do so, but a love for her Lord, and an intense realization of His oneness with His suffering members. Sometimes she would pretend to steal from the royal treasury what she distributed to the poor, for she knew well that her playful theft pleased her husband ; and Malcolm would take her by the wrist, with her hand thus full of gold, and bring her to her confessor, and ask him if she were

not a little thief caught in the very act, who deserved to be well punished. He would take up the books in which she read, and kiss them in fond devotion ; sometimes he would carry them away, and have them beautifully illuminated with figures of saints and golden letters ; he would cover them with gold and jewels, and bring them back to her with joyful triumph.

Her gentle influence was exerted in improving the taste, and refining the manners of Scottish females ; the most terrible licentiousness reigned in the kingdom, but she was like a light from heaven, a type of all purity to her subjects, and her example purified the land. She had ever about her a number of noble maidens, whom she brought up within the palace, and there wrought rich palls for the altar, and magnificent vestments of all sorts for the service of the Church. To purify and refine their taste, she encouraged merchants to come to the kingdom, and of them she bought the richest wares, gold and silver vases, and jewels of price. Into this her little court where she sat with her maidens at work, she admitted none of the nobles but those of whom she had a good opinion ; and she was herself the life and the centre of the circle.

But one thing Margaret did, which Popes and Councils had found a hard matter, and that was, to bring the Church to a uniformity with the rest of Christendom. Strangely indeed had the old tendencies of the Scotch Church developed. Three centuries had passed since the monks of Iona had submitted to be like the rest of Christendom ; but these had been centuries of weakness and of sleep, and when the voice of St. Gregory VII. called men out of their sleep, each

Church had to consider what evils it had to reform.<sup>1</sup> Feudalism had created national Churches and striven to cut off the communication between the parts of Christendom, and this even where it falls short of actual schism is sure to weaken the healthy action of the whole. Scotland had had no feudalism, and therefore it had no prince-bishops, no high baronial abbots, and no simony. But the old sour and sullen spirit had come out, and the developments of the nationality of Scotland were curious. They had given up their old way of keeping Easter, but they had taken up a wrong method of keeping Lent. Instead of beginning on Ash-Wednesday, they put off the fast till the Monday after. Besides which, with a sort of northern Jansenism, they excluded sinners from the Holy Communion on Easter-day, even those whom after confession and penitence, the Church would have received. Lastly, they used in the administration of mass, certain superstitious rites, unknown to the Catholic Church.

It was a strange sight, that assembly in which Margaret, with her husband for an interpreter, argued these points with the Scotch, who certainly have ever shown a singular immobility in religious matters, both of practice and of faith. It was hardly the province of a woman ; it was private judgment, and yet Margaret had that strange way of arriving at conclusions without premises, that unreasoning logic, by which the female mind arrives at what is right by an unconscious process. She

<sup>1</sup> The Scotch appear never to have been treated as schismatics by the Holy See, notwithstanding their different mode of celebrating Easter, which was not that condemned in the Council of Nice. v. Baronius, in ann. 634.

had the Catholic church on her side, and it did not require any deep abstract views to tell her that the Scotch were wrong. The natural rectitude of a Christian heart would tell her, when the Lenten fast came round, that it was an unnatural thing to be keeping carnival when the brethren in other lands were fasting and mourning. Brethren and sisters love to be together at Christmas, and when any member of a family is carried to the grave, terrible as is the grief, all like to share it together, and to accompany the beloved body to the tomb. The Christian world is one family, and when the bells in England rang out an Ash-Wednesday sound, Margaret would not have them rung with a merry chime in Scotland; as well might a sister dance while her brother is in mourning. Thus, the strangely Catholic instinct of the Christian heart would alone guide Margaret, without any profound abstract views of unity and uniformity. Cold and dead does reasoning fall upon the soul, in comparison with this yearning for oneness, of the same nature, as the love of brethren and sisters, though tenfold stronger. In such cases private judgment may be safely left to itself, and becomes infallible; and so Margaret felt that she could not err, though she were teaching the doctors of the church of her nation. And so again with respect to Paschal communion, one who had herself received the Body of her Lord at Easter would feel it strange that any one who was not actually excommunicated should be banished from the altar at that holy time; and when the Clergy urged those fearful words of St. Paul against those who receive unworthily, "All are unworthy in one sense," answered the queen, "but they who for many days before have done penance after confessing their sins on Easter-day, coming to the table of the Lord in the Catho-

lic faith, receive the flesh and blood of the immaculate Lamb, not to judgment, but to the remission of sins." Three things more she obtained from the council, the abolition of superstitious rites at the holy sacrifice of the mass, the observance of the Sunday, which had fallen into disuse in the realm, and certain canons against unlawful marriages. The high spirited Scot, in his enthusiastic love for her goodness, gave up to her gentle persuasion what the authority of their king could not have extorted by force, and what they would never have yielded to the arguments of the Saxon priests.

And now it may well be asked what was the hidden life of Margaret. This cheerful queen, who walked abroad clad in gold and jewels, could hardly have an ascetic air ; and yet beneath her gorgeous robes was a body chastised by perpetual fasts, and knees hardened by long prayers. She kept a fast of forty days before Christmas, in addition to the fast before Lent ; and during those seasons of penitence she rose before midnight, and spent the hours of darkness in singing psalms. A great part of this time she was often alone in prayer in the Church, and when the clerks came in to sing their office, they found her there ready to join them. As the day dawned she lay down again for a very short time to refresh her weary body ; and all this while, during these long and wearing fasts, she was going about doing works of active benevolence. Even before her second brief sleep in the morning, she, with Malcolm's help, had washed the feet of six poor people, and given them alms to relieve their wants. And scarcely had she risen again, when nine orphan infants were brought to her ; she stooped down on her knees to feed them ; and none of the details of sops and of baby linen

were beneath her royal care. During the day three hundred poor were relieved by her own hand, and that of the king. She had another care, of which nothing has yet been said, the care of her children, and how she fulfilled this duty the subsequent history of Scotland bears witness. How well she loved them and her royal husband, her death will tell. Neither her austere life and religious exercises, nor, what was much more likely to do it, her gold and jewels, and queenly apparel, had seared her woman's heart. Her husband and her elder sons were in England engaged in the siege of Alnwick, and she herself had long been ailing, and was now very ill. One day her attendants observed that she was sad, an unusual thing with her ; her heart was thinking on her husband and her sons, who were far away over the border, fighting on English ground, and she said to those about her, " Who knows whether some great evil has not happened to the Scottish realm ?" She got daily worse and worse, and her features had already the paleness of death upon them. She had received the last sacrament, and ordered the Black Cross to be brought to her. It was a piece of the true cross, on which was an ivory figure of the Lord crucified, the whole enclosed in a beautiful reliquary of gold.<sup>1</sup> She had brought it over with her from England, and now she wished to die with it in her hands, and when it was found hard to open the case in which it was contained, she exclaimed, " Ah ! wretched sinner ! I am not then worthy to look upon the Holy Cross ;" and when at length it was brought to her, she kissed it, and wept over it, and glued it to her lips, repeating all the while the fifty-first psalm. At this moment her son Alexander entered the

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred, de Genealog. Twysden i. 349.

room ; she revived on seeing him, and asked him for news about his father and brother. He answered that they were well ; the dying queen, however, guessed the truth by his mournful countenance, and conjured him by the Holy Cross, which she held in her hands, to tell her. He then told her the truth ; his father and his brother had both been killed. Margaret raised her hands to heaven, and said, " All praise be to Thee, everlasting God, who hast made me suffer such agony in my death, as I hope, to the cleansing of some of the stains of my sins." And soon after this her poor broken heart ceased to beat.

She went to where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest ; and she left behind her war and desolation in Scotland. Scarcely had the breath passed from her body when it was remarked that a sweet bloom had come over the death-like paleness of her face, and her features assumed a beautiful expression of peace. It contrasted strangely with the wild storm which raged around her sacred relics. A party among the Scots hated the rule of Malcolm, as being a favourer of Sassenaghs and foreigners ;<sup>1</sup> the wild Gael loved not the approach of civilization, and a party was already in arms prepared to besiege the castle of Edinburgh, where lay her body. Hurriedly by a postern door her sacred remains were conveyed away, and buried in the Abbey of Dunfermline. The rebels succeeded for a time in expelling her son from the throne. For five years war and rapine ravaged Scotland, and usurpers wore its crown,

<sup>1</sup> Omnes Anglos qui de curia regis extiterunt de Scotia expulerunt—Post hac eum regnare permiserunt ea ratione ut amplius in Scotia nec Anglos, nec Normannos introduceret. Simeon Dunelm, in ann. 1093.

but at length it pleased God to restore Edgar, the eldest surviving son of Margaret, to the throne. He was like his great uncle, St. Edward, a mild and amiable prince, and the weary land had peace in his days. After him came a remarkable prince, Alexander, surnamed the Fierce ; and need he had of fierceness, for he had to rule an unruly kingdom, and by main force to keep in awe his rebellious nobles. But fierce as he was to them, he was mild and beneficent to the Clergy, whom he loved for his sainted mother's sake. They were men of enlightened policy, these kings of Scotland ; they cherished all the learning and goodness which the Norman invasion had drifted from the south. This, however, might have been merely the effect of circumstances ; the Saxon kingdom had stretched to the north as far as the castle of the Maidens, the modern name of which, Edwin's burgh, even now bears witness to the Saxon rule. The policy of the Saxon kings by giving it to be ruled as a fief by the Scottish king had converted a dangerous enemy into a friend, and when the Norman conquest came sweeping before it all that was English, it was natural that the Saxons should retire towards the north, and Sassenagh, the name so long applied to the Lowlander by the Gael, bears witness to the extent of the southern importation. It shows also their contempt for their native kings who had adopted the manners and civilization of the Southron ; and this feeling created the party among the native Scottish nobles, which cost so much trouble to Alexander and his brothers. This would naturally incline the king to those of Saxon blood. But it could be nothing but a sound and Christian policy which prompted them to amalgamate their discordant races by the erection of



new bishoprics.<sup>1</sup> St. Andrew's, for a long time, was the only fixed Scottish See, and its Bishop was called the

<sup>1</sup> Amidst the great confusion attending the ecclesiastical History of Scotland, it is difficult to fix the time of the creation or revival of the sees. The common account given in Buchanan cannot be trusted, for St. Aelred, (*de Genealog. Twysden*, p. 348.) expressly says that David found only three or four sees when he came to the throne. The truth probably is that there were great irregularities, (as appears from the 43rd canon of the second Council of Chalons) and that the sees were for a long time unfixed. It appears that by an unusual regulation, the Abbot and monks of Iona had, not of course the consecration, as has been supposed, of Bishops, but their appointment and mission, v. Thomassin, 1, 3, 14, 12. The Bishops thus continued to be like Bishops in partibus without fixed sees. It is difficult to fix the precise time when this state of things ceased. It probably did not cease at once, for in David's time there was an irregular election of a Bishop, which looks like a part of the old system, v. William of Newbridge, i. 23; and as late as 1297, the Culdees made an effort to regain the right of election. It seems, however, likely that Alexander effected the real change by taking the jurisdiction out of the hands of the Culdees, and thus fixing the sees. First, the expulsion of the Culdees from St. Andrew's, and the revival of Glasgow was in his time. The latter event indeed was executed by David, as appears from the inquisition taken by him in Pinkerton; but it was done before he came to the throne, and while he was ruler of Cumbria under his brother, as was usual with the heir apparent to the throne, v. Palgrave, p. 441. Secondly, a passage is quoted in the preface to Twysden, from a manuscript in the Cotton library, which, though it contains mistakes, is too remarkable to have been written without authority. Anno. ab Inc. Domini 1108, ac tempore Regis Malcolmi et S. Margaritæ electus fuit Turgotus, Prior Dunelmensis in Episcopatum St. Andreæ et in diebus illis totum jus Keledeorum per totum regnum Scotiæ transivit in Episcopatum S. Andreæ. Turgot was not made Bishop by Malcolm, but by Alexander; and so it appears that in Alexander's days the jurisdiction over Scotland was taken away from

Bishop of the Scots,<sup>1</sup> as the prelate of Whiterne, as successor of St. Ninian, was the Bishop of the Picts. To this see king Alexander added Glasgow and perhaps also Elgin, or at least he revived them; and took care to appoint to these sees men of learning and piety. But the throne of a Scottish diocese was by no means an easy seat. Turgot, whom Alexander early in his reign appointed to the see of St. Andrew's, went back to his cloister of Durham, for his heart sunk within him at the difficulties which surrounded him. Eadmer, too, the companion of St. Anselm, was elected to the same see, but the very next year he came back to Canterbury, for it was better to be a simple monk of St. Benedict than to bear the weary crosier of St. Andrew's. Again, John, the new Bishop of Glasgow, fairly ran away to Rome, and from thence to the Holy Land, and could only be brought back but by an express command of the Holy See. One part of their difficulty was doubtless

the Culdees, and transferred to the Bishop of St. Andrew's. The actual erection of St. Andrew's into a metropolitan see was not effected till long afterwards, owing to the opposition of the Archbishop of York; but the breaking of the power of the Culdees, is in this passage clearly expressed. It is therefore most likely on the whole that the great change is to be referred to him, and not to Malcolm. Caithness and Elgin may have been revived by Malcolm; yet it is remarkable that the revolt in consequence of which they are said to have been erected, is probably that said by Fordun to have occurred in Alexander's time. The creation of the greater number of the Scottish Sees is owing to David, as St. Aelred says that on his accession to the throne he found three or four sees, but at his death left nine. Two out of these four are known to have been St. Andrew's and Glasgow, the other two were probably Elgin and Caithness.

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, Enquiry, Appendix, p. 464.

their difference with the Archbishop of York, who claimed canonical jurisdiction over them, but the chief obstacles lay in their unruly Clergy, the degenerate Culdees. Alexander, however, determined to remedy this evil ; monasticism was reviving in the north of England, and wherever a new monastery was established, or an old one revived, there were the headquarters of religion, and the monks became the instructors of a people, whom the mere pressure of desolation had stupified and brutalized. The example of Durham had given him a precedent for the expulsion of the secularized Culdees, and he substituted regular canons for them at St. Andrew's. He restored to the prior and canons of St. Andrew's the lands which had been taken away from the Church, and the quaint style in which the act of restoration was effected is a specimen of the state of things in Scotland. In the cathedral of St. Andrew's all the nobles of the realm were assembled ; and with them Robert, the newly-elected Bishop, formerly prior of Scone, and the new canons of the convent, their shaven crowns and ecclesiastical habit mingling strangely with the bright armour of the Lowland nobles, and the waving plaid of the chieftains of the Gael. In the midst of this assembly there was led up to the high altar Alexander's Arabian war horse, saddled and bridled, and splendidly caparisoned, with the king's shield fastened to his back, and a silver lance, which afterwards became the shaft of the crucifix of the Church. By this strange charter the lands were delivered to the monks, and the transaction was duly impressed upon the witnesses. Besides which he built the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Scone, the ancient seat of Scottish royalty, and the monastery of St. Columba, in the little island of Inchcolm, in the Frith of Forth ; and any one

who has been on Loch Tay, will remember the green islet where a monastery was erected over the grave of his wife Sibylla.

It was in the year 1124 that Alexander died, shortly after he had conferred the lands on the Church of St. Andrew's. His brother David thus found himself in possession of an unenviable throne, for Alexander died childless.<sup>1</sup> He endeavoured to avoid the dangerous honour ; and indeed he had few temptations to quit the court of England, where he was honoured as the first of English nobles. Henry had loved him for the cheerful and warm-hearted disposition which he had inherited from his sainted mother. He had been knighted by the king's own hand, and was a general favourite with the whole court. He related to Aelred of himself, in after times, that he used to smile at his sister, the good queen Maud, and at the filthy objects whose wants, in her charity, she would herself relieve. But even in the thoughtlessness of his youth, he was preserved from evil, and was already distinguished by his zeal for the Church in that part of Scotland which, as heir-apparent to the crown, was his appanage. And now he shuddered at the task which was imposed upon him. He yielded, however, to the persuasion of the Bishops, and was crowned. It was of the utmost consequence to Henry, that in the event of a disputed succession, which was likely, Scotland should be in the hands of one bound to the line of St. Edward by so many ties ; and he, too, probably urged David to accept the throne. David did not find his kingdom so hard to rule as he had imagined. What his brother,

*Scimus enim regnum non appetivisse sed horruisse, says St. Aelred.*

with all his fierceness, could keep, only at the cost of much labour and blood, he ruled in peace by his meekness and charity.<sup>1</sup> He managed to reconcile, at least to keep in order, the two discordant elements of his kingdom, the old patriarchal chieftains of the plaided clans, and the new nobles which were rising up, the earls and barons of the feudal Lowlands. He was the king, in an especial manner, of the Church and of the poor. A novel personage for Scotland, and one which she had not seen for centuries, meets us at the outset of his reign—a legate of the Holy See. He met the King with the Bishops and Clergy at Roxburgh. In the reign of Malcolm, the queen was the leading figure in the council, and though perfectly justified by circumstances, it was not the usual mode of proceeding, as may well be supposed. David's object was to fix the hierarchy, and to erect a native church, instead of depending on English clergy. To effect the first of these purposes, he more than doubled the number of Bishops ; and for the latter object, he erected many monasteries of the Cistercian order, and houses of regular canons. How well he succeeded is evident from the fact, that while contemplation was by no means the line of the old Scottish clergy, some of the distinguished members of the mystic school of St. Victor, at Paris, were Scotchmen. He was in some measure a St. Louis in the twelfth century, and the story of his often returning to his palace at the petition of a poor man, when he had already foot in

<sup>1</sup> *Regnum quod frater laboriorissime tenuit, mox ille sine contradictione susceptum, quaquaversum inclinum sibi et quietum tenuit.*—Sim. Dunelm. in ann. 1124. St. Aelred calls him the author of the Scottish polity.

stirrup, and the merry horn was calling him to the chase, reminds one of the oak of Vincennes, under which the good Louis sat to give judgment to all who came to him. His brother Alexander's appetite probably was not spoiled when, in his royal justice he hanged a felon ; but David was known to weep on ordering an execution. In another respect was David like the sainted king. The good people, in St. Louis's reign, made jingling rhymes about his love for clerks, and one of David's successors called him a "sair Saint for the crown." And yet James might have had no kingdom to govern, if David had not preceded him ; and doubtless the crown was not the worse for the prayers which monks and nuns offered up in the many abbeys founded by David ; nor were the Scotch less religious because he left nine bishoprics where he found but four. If it had not been for the unhappy invasion of England, which will be noticed by and bye, the parallel with St. Louis would have been complete.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *The Struggle.*

WE left Aelred in his boyhood, the playfellow of Henry, the son of David, Earl of Huntingdon, and we must now be content to find him a youth in the palace of David, king of Scotland. Splendid was the prospect which opened upon him. In a new and flourishing kingdom just about to take its place among the nations of Europe, the favourite of its king, he might have become the first of its nobles. Aelred's family

is said to have been noble,<sup>1</sup> though, from the present situation of his father, it must have been decayed ; and even if he had been base-born, the earldoms and fiefs of this period were not so restricted to men of noble blood but that a poor adventurer might hope to obtain them. It is true, that in most cases the feudal lord would be coincident with the patriarchal chief ; but in England, especially, precedents might be found where the poor knight became an earl, rich in broad lands and in vassals.<sup>2</sup> Society was forming itself anew, and a new nobility was arising in England and Scotland ; and if Aelred had had the warlike taste of Henry, his companion, he might have fought his way to be the head of the Scottish chivalry. But his gentle and retiring spirit led him to books and study, and Aelred followed the example of Waltheof, in preferring his books to tilts and tournaments. Here, too, if he had but been ambitious, a fine field lay before him. He was a man of learning rare in those times. In his boyhood, he had read Cicero and Terence,<sup>3</sup> and those authors quoted by chance in his works, are but specimens of his acquirements in classical learning. He knew the Latin Fathers too, and sundry allusions to genus and species show in him the rising schoolman, to whom the mysteries of the trivium and quadrivium were

<sup>1</sup> Joscelyn. Vita St. Waltheni. ap. Bolland. Aug. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of Henry I.'s favourites, the author of *Gesta Stephani* says, *quique regno nobiliores gloriam eorum et pompam, ægre ferebant, utpote qui ex imo creati genere se multo nobiliores et divitiis excederent et dominio superarent.* Duchesne. Script. Norm. 932. v. also 966. He also talks of landless nobles, p. 956. As for Scotland, there are said to have been no earls or barons before Malcolm Canmore's time.

<sup>3</sup> De spirit. am. lib. iii. p. 469, ed. Gibbons.

familiar.<sup>1</sup> He left school at an early age, but he still continued his studies at court. He might have led, if he had pleased, the march of intellect, as it may be called, in Scotland, and it would have been hard if a mitre and crosier had not fallen to his share.<sup>2</sup> But never was a soul less ambitious than Aelred's. From his boyhood, his sole ambition was concentrated in loving and being loved ; his text-book was Cicero on Friendship, which he read with avidity, and endeavoured to carry out in real life.<sup>3</sup> He read romances too, for he knew that story which in after-days he characterized as "a vain tale concerning one Arthur."<sup>4</sup> The friendship however of David and Jonathan in Scripture, affected him more than all the feats of the Round Table, and the love of Queen Guenever to boot. In the legends of Christian Martyrs, he wept with tears of tenderness over the devoted friendship of the Christian soldier who saved the virgin of Antioch out of the place of shame, and afterwards shared her crown of martyrdom.<sup>5</sup> He went about the world seeking for objects on which to expend his affection, and feeling pained if his love met with no return.

<sup>1</sup> Post scholas præponere relictas. Joscel. Sed proprio sudore et ingenii subtilis sibi innati exercitio expolitus supra multos literis sæcularibus imbutos.—Ibid. Laurence, Abbot of Westminster, in the preface to the Life of St. Bridget before quoted, speaks of his cura literarum in curia regis.

<sup>2</sup> Tanto amore a Scotorum Rege complexus est ut ad episcopum eum promovisset nisi ad Cisterciensem ordinem advolasset.—Vita St. Aelred. ap. Boll.

<sup>3</sup> Cum adhuc puer essem in scholis tota se mea mens dedit affectui et devovit amori ut mihi nihil dulcius quam amari et amare videretur.—De Spirit. Ami. Prolog.

<sup>4</sup> Spec. Char. 2. 17.

<sup>5</sup> De Spirit. Anni. i. p. 435.



But this was a case which could not often happen ; for he was too amiable not to be loved by all the world. He lived far from his home, and very little is told of his family ; his mother's name is not once mentioned, but this was made up to him by the love of all about him. He was one of those who, by the smiling faces which ever meet them, feel sure that their presence is always welcome.<sup>1</sup> In the banquetting hall, while the merry jest was going round, his quick wit and ready speech made him an acquisition, while from his guileless unaffectedness no one felt his inferiority. Indeed, his guilelessness almost approached to credulity ; and though quick-witted enough to see into the faults of others, yet he seemed to have an universal belief in the goodness of the human heart, which neutralized his cleverness. His high favour raised him enemies ; but even these he won over by his meekness. One of the king's knights, an envious man, hated him for his good fortune, as he deemed it, and one day his hatred broke out, even in the king's presence, and he loaded him with reproachful and insulting words. But Aelred remained unmoved, and said, "Thou art right, sir knight, and hast spoken right well ; what thou sayest is truth, and I see thou art a true friend of mine." The rude soldier immediately begged his pardon, and swore that he would do his best to serve him. "I am glad of thy penitence, said Aelred, and I love thee the more because by thy hatred I have advanced in love to God." This sweet temper could not fail to bring him friends, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Erat vir optime morigeratus, facetus, facundus, socialis et jocundus. Joscelyn. Vid. also his account of himself, Spec. Chari. i. 28, where he seems to point to something of the sort.*

king above all loved him. He used to tell him family stories about the courage of his father, King Malcolm, and the goodness of his sister Matilda, the queen of England.<sup>1</sup> He gave him the stewardship of his household, a high office, which afterwards gave its name to the royal family of England and Scotland, and which, about that time, a clerk, the favourite and minister of King Louis, held in France.<sup>2</sup>

Happy Aelred ! what had he to do but to lead a religious and literary life ; he was known far and wide for his learning, and an abbot of Westminster dedicated to him a work of his, written "in pure Latin," as being one who "in a king's court cultivated letters." It seems that he went out hunting too with the king ;<sup>3</sup> at least he is well acquainted "with the law of hunting, which they call the *tryste* in vulgar tongue," where all the nobles, with their hounds, were posted in different parts of the wood, so as to surround the quarry ; and he knew well the paths and recesses of the forest, for he describes a flowery knoll in the midst of it, where the tired huntsmen lay down to rest after their toils. At this time it is probable that he made those acquisitions of historical lore which afterwards fitted him to become one of the historians of England. He had inherited the hereditary love for the royal line of

<sup>1</sup> De Genealog. ap Twysden.

<sup>2</sup> St. Aelred is called *dapifer regius*. In common cases *dapifer* means simply the Reeve, but in a king's household it is equivalent to *senescallus*. The *dapifer* of King Louis is called *Major domus regiæ*, or *maire du palais*, in the Chronicle of Morigny, v. Benedictine note to St. Bernard, Ep. 78. Laurence addresses St. Aelred as *dispensator regius*, and he himself talks of his having come *de coquinis non de scholis*.

<sup>3</sup> De Genealog. ap. Twysden. p. 367.

Cedric, and delighted in the beautiful tales of Alfred and St. Neot, and the battle of Ashdown. He loved to trace their genealogy, and he looked forward with hope to their restoration. If to be loved and honoured, and to pass a life in congenial studies, with no enemies, free from great sin, be happiness, then was Aelred happy ; and men, as he passed, pointed him out as a man whose lot was to be envied.

And yet the High Steward of Scotland was not happy. It would be easy to give the reason for this phenomenon in a few words. It was the grace of God, urging him to his place in Christ's kingdom ; it was the cross casting its shadow on all earthly joys. This is of course the proper explanation of it ; but it is through our own feelings and tempers that God leads us, and it is the part of history to unfold the human side of events, which appear to us, and are really, as far as we are concerned, various and successive ; while, as the work of God, they are one. What then was the reason of Aelred's unhappiness amidst all the gifts of nature and of grace ? The friends about him called it morbid restlessness, and he tried to believe them and to shake it off ; but it would come back again for all his efforts. Even his books were tasteless : neither Cicero nor Horace could satisfy him, and the purest latinity could not confer happiness ; nay, the philosophy of St. Augustine and St. Anselm was at fault ;<sup>1</sup> and after he had proved to his satisfaction the being of a God, after having confuted Manichees and Nominalists, the same void was in his heart, and he was still restless.

<sup>1</sup> The sixth chapter of the *Spec. Char.*, lib. i., is evidently taken from St. Anselm ; and the influence of St. Augustine de Trinitate is also evident throughout the *Speculum*.

No one could blame his studies ; it was a noble scheme to reform the taste and arouse the understanding of a nation arising from barbarism ; but it is not enough that a work should be blameless, if it be not that which the Lord requires of us. In itself a literary life is of all others the most empty and unsatisfactory. Things that belong exclusively to this sublunary sphere are at least in their place ; they are all of earth, and they gain the things of earth and men enjoy them as they may. But the student aims higher and fails ; after he has thought, and judged, and analyzed, he has not extended one jot the sphere of human knowledge, because it is human after all. The lowest angel knows at a glance by intuition what is to us a laboured fabric of premise and conclusion, and is at best but the shadow of the truth. After all that is often said about the blamelessness of literary pleasures, they do not satiate the hungry soul a whit the more ; chalk and chaff are not food, because they are not poison. So learned Aelred by a bitter experience : but he had still something else to learn, and that was, that the heart as well as the understanding can be filled but by one object alone. It was not wonderful that Aelred found his high notions of friendship sink under him. Was it altogether Christian, this craving for being loved, this insatiable desire of winning human hearts ? It was not admiration or honour that he sought—it was love ; and is this not only a more subtle form of inordinate affection ? There was once an Archbishop whom any one who knows the works of both, would at once compare with Aelred, like him in his generous devotedness, and his warm affections, the favourite of a king's court, the honoured friend of a king's son. Like Aelred he was of classical taste, consulted by wits and learned

men, a lover of St. Augustine, a Christian philosopher. Yet all were nothing to him, rank, and honour, and wealth ; they slid away from his mind as from a polished surface, and had no hold upon it ; but there was one thing which he wished and obtained, the affection of those about him. High as was his rank, yet the lowest did not shrink before the stately figure of the Archbishop of Cambray and the Peer of France. He was dead to all things but one, and that was human affection. God in his mercy separated him from the being whom he loved most on earth, the king's son, who was his friend and his pupil, and thus was his whole man crucified. How very much of this resembles Aelred's case, we shall soon see ; but meanwhile we will quote the words of this saintly prelate, about this same desire of loving and being loved, which he himself knew so well.<sup>1</sup>

“ After having renounced all that is around us, and which is not self, we must come to the last sacrifice, which is that of all which is in us, and is self. If a man's temper is full of frankness and disinterestedness, if his disposition leads him to take pleasure in doing good, and if he has keen delicacy of feeling, and a taste for fair-dealing and for disinterested friendship, then let him beware lest he fall in love with himself ; let him guard against a feeling of complacency in these natural gifts. Every one must at some time or other have come across some man apparently all for other people, nothing for himself, caressed by all the good, one who gives up his own wishes and is forgetful of self. This same forgetfulness is so great a virtue that even self-love would fain imitate it, and puts

<sup>1</sup> Fenelon, *Nécessité du renoncement*.

its greatest glory in appearing to seek for none. This self-command and renunciation, which would be the crucifixion of nature if it were real and effectual, becomes, on the contrary, the very subtle and viewless instrument of a pride, which disdains all the ordinary methods of rising, and would trample under foot all the gross subjects of vanity, which puff up other men. Still it is easy to pull the mask from this pride, with all its modesty, though it in no way peeps out as pride, so completely does it seem to have renounced all that allures others. If those whom such a man loves, and assists, do not pay him back with their friendship, esteem and confidence, he is touched to the quick. Look at him ; he is not disinterested, however he strive to appear so. The truth is, he pays himself not with the base coin that others seek ; he wants not mawkish praises nor money, nor the proceeds of place and external dignity. Still he has his price too ; he thirsts after the esteem of the good ; he loves that he may be loved, and that hearts may be touched by his devotedness ; he only appears to be forgetful of self, that he may be in the thoughts of all."

Such, or something like this, were the thoughts of Aelred. He saw that his soul was in danger, and that he must fly. He bethought himself of such words as these, "If thy foot offend thee, cut it off ; if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out." And before these solemn words, his glowing thoughts of friendship looked like a dream of romance. He saw that friendship was a negative thing, it might be a virtue, or it might be a vice ; in itself it was neither. It is one of those natural feelings, which with the whole of man's moral nature is taken for granted in the Gospel. True it is that our blessed Lord has ennobled it by His

wonderful condescension in loving St. John, but in ennobling it, He has declared that it must be sacrificed, if need be, to God's will. This was the lesson which Aelred learned ; he recognized that he had made human affection paramount even to the love of God, and the thought struck him at once that he must fly. He turned pale and trembled at it. Oh ! how comes it that it is always the most loving who are called upon to sacrifice their love ? why are the tenderest hearts chosen to be torn ? why are they who love father and mother, and brethren and sisters, and friends, more intensely than others, ever singled out to stand forth and give them up ? It is one of the miracles of God's grace, bringing strength out of weakness. But it is never accomplished without rending of the heart and agony, which makes it a spiritual martyrdom. And this Aelred felt to the full. How many things were in array against him, keen arguments, tender delicacy, good feelings, to say nothing of pride and the love of ease ! Was the High Steward of Scotland to take his place as the lowest brother in an obscure convent ? the elegant scholar to take to digging ? the trim courtier to put on the coarse monkish cowl ? It was fanaticism to leave the sphere in which he had been placed, and where he might do good. It was ingratitude to leave the good king David, unfeeling to leave prince Henry, the companion of his youth. Besides which, he had a friend whom he loved more than life ; he does not tell us his name, but this was the sorest pain of all. Nothing but the full conviction that his soul was in danger where he was, could have enabled him to break away from so many ties.

And where was he to go, when he once turned himself on the wide world, and had given up the royal

palace in which he had lived from childhood. In those days there could be but one answer to the question, he could but be a monk. He might have been a secular priest ; but first of all, there were the mitre and crosier in the back-ground, which he dreaded ; and secondly, it would not have answered his purpose at all, for it would have left him in the midst of his friends with all the ties, from which it was his very design to break away. They knew the cloister and the world well, who made conversion a synonym for monastic life. It was a turning to God, heart and soul, when one who had dwelt in the world, and partaken of its pleasures, went into the cloister to learn to have no joy, but God alone.

Besides which, becoming a secular priest was by no means giving up the world, in the same sense as entering the cloister. It was not the same thing, and if Aelred was called by God's grace to the one, he was not to the other. It should never be forgotten that the middle age world was a very bad one ; it was better than its neighbours, but alas ! the world is the world in every age. The twelfth century was not a period of fantastic youth, like the fifteenth, nor was it the faithless, philosophic, calculating manhood of a period, about which the less, reader, that you and I say, the better ; it was rather like boyhood, petulant and quaint, in its waywardness. Its tournaments were the rough plays of grown up boys, ending it might be, in blood, seldom in ill-will ; its very policy was a very inartificial wiliness ; a ready lie, a shutting of ports against Pope's messengers, are specimens of it. And the Clergy had their world too, one, which would not have suited Aelred. The cathedral Clergy and the secular canons were in a bad state ; their rich benefices were spent in procuring the means of a sense-



less pomp. They were but little like ecclesiastics, those painted figures, on prancing horses, with gilded bits, embroidered saddles, and spurs plated with silver, while the rider himself with his flowing locks, invisible tonsure, and pelisse of various furs, with purple collar and fringe, like a woman's dress, remind us of the courtly abbé of later times.<sup>1</sup> As for ecclesiastics in general, Henry II.<sup>2</sup> would not have had a pretext for endeavouring to bring the Clergy into the secular courts if there had not been among them many criminals of the worst class ; and the decrees of councils in those times fully bear out the inference. The only way to reform such a system was to create an order of men, founded on an entirely opposite principle, to oppose voluntary poverty to riches, chastity to licentiousness, and obedience to insolence. An individual might indeed stay in the midst of the evil, and do his best to reform it ; but this was not enough, system must be opposed to system. In the monastic system is contained the remedial system of the church ; and this was the reason why in the twelfth century, regular canons so often replaced secular, in cathedral churches ; why the Premonstrants were founded with a direct bearing on the Clergy, and why the Augustinians were to such an extent reformed. The seculars indeed had their own work too ; among them arose almost the only martyr in the century, and that one was St. Thomas. Still the monks were the real reformers of the Church. And this was the reason of St. Bernard's impassioned language, by which he calls upon men to come into the cloister. It was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare

<sup>1</sup> St. Bern. Ep. i. 2. In Cant. xxxiii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> William of Newbridge, ii. 16.

ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight ; repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was the voice which sounded through Aelred's heart, and would not let him rest. So he did not go to Durham, where the monks served the stately cathedral, lately built by William of St. Carilefe ; nor did he go southward to Westminster, the Abbot of which was his friend, where was the sacred body of his beloved St. Edward ; but he chose out an obscure Cistercian monastery, the name of which was hardly known in the world.

It must have been with a heavy heart that Aelred bade adieu to Henry,<sup>1</sup> "that meek and pious man, of sweet spirit, and heart full of the milk of human kindness, him with whom he had lived from his cradle, his playfellow in boyhood, his companion in youth ; the good king David too, now an old man, whom he loved above all men ;" and many years afterwards the bitterness of that parting remained fresh in his soul, and he declared that "though he left them in body in order to serve his Lord, his heart was always with them." It must have been with a sad heart that he heard for the last time the bells of the Abbey of Scone, and saw at his feet the noble Tay winding through a vale, whose steep sides, clothed with thick woods, open upon a plain, where even then rose the towers of the fair town of Perth, the whole bounded by the blue outline, and the seamed sides of the Grampians. With a heavy heart did he quit Dunfermline, and retrace the still recent steps trodden by St. Margaret, on her painful way from the shore to the palace, and which even now after seven centuries of revolutions and estrangement, are uneffaced from the hearts of the

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred, *De Genealog.* ap. Twysden, 368.

people. Sadly he must have felt, when he turned his back on Dunfermline, with its expanse of sea glancing in the sun before him, and on the wide spread plain of Perth, for he was going to a place where the horizon was very circumscribed. Even now, we may follow his steps. There is in the North Riding of York, not far from the borders of Durham, a nook of surpassing beauty amidst a perfect labyrinth of vales, formed by ridges of hills, crossing each other in every direction. The place is one where three valleys meet, two of them shutting in a third, which is Rievaulx. Along the brow of the hill which overhangs this vale the traveller passes, and then goes down the steep side through hanging woods, from terrace to terrace, till at the very bottom, from the last ledge of all, he lights upon a ruined Abbey. Lovely indeed it is in its calm decay, rising to a stately height from the bosom of its smooth, grassy lawn, and most beautiful it must have been in the days of its magnificence, when the Abbey burst upon the sight, lying at the bottom of its deep dell, folded in from the world. Long before the traveller came upon it as he was winding down the successive steep, it announced its presence by its sweet bells, and great was the joy of the tired wayfarer when it lay before him with its cloistered quadrangle, and over the long roof of the refectory and dormitory rose the lofty Church, with its light lancet windows towering over all. Beautiful it was in all the graceful and disciplined animation of monastic life ; its white monks issuing from its gates in their hooded riding mantles, to go to some distant grange, or working all together in a line on the hanging steep, while the mill was heard, its wheel turning merrily amidst the splashing waters of the mountain-stream, which dashed along its pebbly bed at

the bottom of the dell, where it had just joined a sister stream at the fork where the valleys met. Alas ! it is very different now ; but we will not mourn over it ; there was a time when it was just as unlike the stately pile, still noble in its ruins, and that was on the morning of that day when the Abbey gates opened and closed on Aelred.

Many things there are in the middle ages, which look very beautiful at a distance, and were beautiful in reality, but which required something more than romance to make them tolerable. The crusades were a noble conception, but Blanche of Castile fainted when she saw the cross on St. Louis's shoulder, and Joinville durst not cast a look at his castle as he passed it, lest his heart should fail him, and he should return to his wife and children.

If there had been any portion of fine sentiment in Aelred's retirement to Rievaulx,<sup>1</sup> it would have disappeared now. Not one stone of the noble edifice, now in ruins, had then been raised ; not an approach to triple lancet, or rose window, or shaft with capital of twisted foliage. A very few years, probably not more than two had elapsed, since Walter de Espec had planted in this place a colony of Cistercians, sent by St. Bernard from Clairvaux, under William, their first abbot. Tradition in after times framed a romantic story about the foundation of the noble abbey, that Walter had brought the white monks from across the sea to pray for the soul of his son, a high-

<sup>1</sup> Rievaulx was founded in 1132. There are no data for ascertaining the precise time when St. Aelred left Scotland. It seems likely however that he did so before the foundation of the first Cistercian Monastery in Scotland, which was Melross. 1136.

spirited boy, who had been thrown from his horse at the foot of a little stone cross, by the road side, and had died on the spot. The truth however is, that Walter had no children, and gave a great part of his lands to the Church.<sup>1</sup> Blackmore was the ominous name of the place, which the Norman monks changed to the sweeter name of St. Mary of Rievaux, from the Rye, a little stream that ran through the valley. It is said to have been a place that made the soul shudder, and a vast wilderness, and Aelred himself in after times called it a very deep dale. It was a place hard to find, amidst the windings of the many valleys, and Aelred, after travelling along the high ridge, plunged down through a path cut in the tangled wood. Down and still further down, he went as though he were leaving the cheerful light of day. The old and gloomy trees seemed to close about him, and as he approached the bottom of the valley, the leaves were dripping with the damp mists which arose from the ill-drained marshy grounds around the little stream. But when he knocked at the lowly gate of the abbey, and the brother fell down at his feet, as was the wont in Cistercian abbeys, with a "Deo gratias," thanking God for the new-comer, then Aelred felt as if he had at last found a resting-place in this weary world. Then William the abbot, the friend of St. Bernard, welcomed the young Saxon to St. Mary's house ; and though their dark features were those of foreigners, and their language was that of enemies of his race, yet he felt that he was among brothers. The struggle for life and death was over, and he had but to go on in

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred expressly says so in his History of the War of the Standard.

the path which God had assigned to him. And now that it is over, we will give the description of it in his own words. It will show how he looked back upon it, when time had enabled him to think calmly about it, when he could lay bare his own mind, as St. Augustine did in his Confessions. "Lo ! my sweet Lord, once I sought rest in the world for my wretched soul, but every where I found toil and groans, grief and affliction of spirit. Thou didst cry out to me, Lord, Thou didst cry out, Thou didst call me, frighten me and break through my deafness, Thou didst smite and break down my obstinacy ; Thou didst bring sweetness to my bitter heart. I heard, but ah ! later than I ought, Thy voice crying to me ; for I lay, polluted and rolled in filth, bound, and a captive, in the nest of iniquity, crushed under the weight of inveterate habit. Then I bethought myself, who I was, where, and of what nature. I shuddered, Lord, and shrunk in fear, from my own lineaments ; the foul reflection of my wretched soul frightened me. I was unpleasing to myself, because Thou wert pleasing. I fain would have fled from myself, and to Thee, but the merest trifles, as one has said before me,<sup>1</sup> the vanity of vanities, which had seduced my soul, held me back ; the chains of vile bodily habit bound me, the love of flesh and blood held me in bonds, the graces of social life tightened them ; above all there were the ties of a certain friendship, sweet to me above all the sweets of life. And men looking on my smiling outside, and knowing nothing of what was going on within, used to say of me, Oh ! how well is it with him, how well ! they did not know that all was wrong where alone all

<sup>1</sup> St. Aug. Conf. 8, 11.

ought to be right. For my wound was deep-seated within, tormenting, scaring me, and filling all within me with its intolerable corruption ; and unless Thou hadst stretched forth Thy hand, who knows if, intolerable burden as I was to myself, I might not have had recourse to the worst remedy of despair ! I began then to consider as much as one who had no experience could do, what great sweetness there is in Thy love, how much peace in that sweetness, how much security in that peace. By degrees Thou didst become sweet to my taste, still partially diseased as it was, and I used to say to myself, O ! that I were healed ; and I would raise myself up to Thee, but again I used to fall back upon myself. Still fleshly pleasures kept me as a man in chains, by a strange power of habit, though my soul really loved best that which it could yet only guess at by the power of its intellect. Often did I say to my friends, where are now all our pleasures, all our joys, all our delights ? at this moment how much of them do we feel ? all that is joyful in them is gone ; and all that remains is that part which stings our conscience, which causes us to fear death, which binds us to everlasting punishment. Put side by side with all our riches, our delights, and honours, this one thing which those who are Christ's possess, the right not to fear death. I loathed myself as I spoke this, and sometimes I wept in the bitter struggle of my soul. I loathed all that I saw, and still the habit of fleshly pleasure held me down. But Thou, who hearest the groans of the captives, who loosest those appointed unto death, Thou didst burst my chains ; Thou, who bringest publicans and harlots into Paradise, hast converted me, the chief of sinners, to Thyself. And lo ! I breathe again under Thy yoke, I am at rest under

Thy burden, for Thy yoke is easy, and Thy burden is light.”<sup>1</sup>

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *The Battle of the Standard.*

It was fortunate for Aelred that he escaped when he did from the court of Scotland to his quiet home at Rievaulx. A very few years, probably hardly two, after he had made his profession, a storm gathered in Scotland, and swept over the north of England, such as would have effectually destroyed his quiet had he not already got into shelter. In 1136, Henry I. died, and then began the stormy reign of Stephen, disastrous for all England, but especially for the north. In this chapter then will come out the difference between the world and the cloister. The contrast is like that picture of the transfiguration, where Peter, James, and John are seen with the Lord in the Mount, round the base of which are heard the howlings of the poor demoniac, torn by the devil, whom even the Apostles cannot cast out, and apparently deserted even by the Lord. We will try to look upon this turmoil as Aelred would have done, nay, as he did, for he himself is the historian, from which the greater part is taken ; and in the wildest fits of the storm, we may imagine him looking on quietly and listening with his head enveloped in his cowl in the cloister of Rievaulx.

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. i. 28.



Strange was the scene in England as soon as king Henry was dead ; law and justice in those times depended so much on individuals that the withdrawal of one man was a signal for general riot. Henry's power over his nobles was very much of a personal nature ; he had done what in the fifteenth century it cost a king of France a rebellion among his nobles before he could effect ; he had abridged their rights of chase in favour of the crown.<sup>1</sup> It was not an empty privilege, that of vert and venison in the broad forests of English oak, which covered the land ; besides the joys of the noisy chase, there were the huge branches of the oak to keep up the large fire in the baronial hall, and the substantial banquet of the boar's head and venison for the lord and his retainers. Henry had constituted himself protector-general of woods, forests, deer, wild boars, and game of all sorts.<sup>2</sup> Some men durst not hunt in their own woods, for fear of finding a king's officer at their doors, summoning them to appear at the chief pleas ; and if Henry's sharp eye discovered that a wood had been thinned or wasted, he would impose a fine on the offender. Hardly was the king dead than a joint attack on woods and forests took place, and a general onslaught was made on the large herds of deer, which a long reign had preserved, "so that hardly two could any where be seen together." The highway had always belonged to the king, as well as the forest, and all offences committed were punished by his officers, but now the king's peace was broken with im-

<sup>1</sup> v. Michelet. *Histoire de France*, xiii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen swore when he came to the throne *quod neminem de silvis propriis implacitaret licet venationem in eisdem caperet, sicut fecerat rex Henricus*. Brompton ap. Twysden, p. 1024.

punity, for there was no king to keep it. Every man preyed on his neighbour, and made the best of his time, men wiped off old scores, and revenged themselves on their enemies ; rapine and violence of all sorts reigned in England as soon as news came that the old king was dead. The matter was not much mended when Stephen, by the perjury of bishops and barons, was elected to the throne.<sup>1</sup> To do him justice, at the beginning of his reign, he seems certainly to have done his best to re-establish peace, but his title to the throne was defective, and when once the Empress landed, anarchy and confusion took their own course, and it was said emphatically that "there was no justice in Stephen's reign." Then arose a species of men, which feudalism had ever a tendency to create ; the petty lords, who, from their dungeon-keeps, ruthlessly wasted and harried the whole country around them. Our notions of feudal barons are ever connected with fair castles and trains of knights, fluttering pennons, and glittering armour. But the fact is that during the reigns of the first Norman kings, very few nobles were allowed to have castles.<sup>2</sup> It was from the lack of fortresses that England fell so soon into the power of the Conqueror ; and he built castles every where to keep the country in awe ; but then he kept them in his own hands, and his soldiers were only

<sup>1</sup> Gesta Steph. 929.

<sup>2</sup> Thus one Turgisius in Stephen's reign, holds a castle, and the country round, but it is said *rex ad conservandum magis quam ad possidendum commiserat*. Gesta Steph. p. 966. Thus of the castle of Exeter it is said, *quod semper regalis juris extiterat*. Ibid, 934. The Bishop of Durham asks leave to have a castle *Anglia Sacra*, 723, as also the Bishop of Salisbury and Ely in Henry the First's time.

warders not possessors. The manor house, and not the castle was then the characteristic of England ; magnificent Umbravilles and Bagots must as yet content themselves with a low moated house, two stories high, with its staircase outside, and only to rise by and bye to the dignity of a castle. But in king Stephen's time,<sup>1</sup> every man did as he pleased, or as he could, and when the day of reckoning came in Henry's time it was found that every knightling possessed not only a castle but a seal, like the king of England himself. Little do they know of these iron-hearted men, who picture to themselves a generous knight errant, pricking forth in search of adventures. Alas ! chivalry is but an ideal, a high and beautiful standard, created by Christianity, but never realized except in individuals ; for one St. Louis there were a thousand Bluebeards. The knight of the twelfth century was not the fantastic and often licentious champion of later times ; but in king Stephen's time at least he was often a needy adventurer, who roamed about the country, pillaging his neighbours, and looking out for a fief. Exceptions occur which cheer the weary reader of history, for instance that young Christian knight, who, as the beginning of the good deeds to which his vow of knighthood bound him, sheltered in his house a whole convent of forlorn monks, whose new-built monastery had been burnt over their heads.<sup>2</sup> But generally speaking your knight at the time of which we are writing was a very suspicious character. As for the nobles they were but too often men of brutal

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, i. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale v. p. 349. Dominus Rogerus de Molbray qui cingulum militare de novo sumpserat, inter initia bonorum operum suorum habitationem providit, &c.

licentiousness, great consumers of beef and wine, and great oppressors of the poor.<sup>1</sup>

When such men as these were let loose upon the world by the license of civil war, it was not wonderful that the defenceless Church should suffer. The churches were found to be excellent castles, ready made, without the trouble of building. Thus a certain Geoffrey Talbot seized on the cathedral church of Hereford, expelled the priests, and made it a garrison for his soldiers ; in the church-yard fortifications were thrown up, and the dead were torn from their graves, and their bodies thrown about, while a military engine was in full play on the tower, throwing large stones and missiles from the place "whence," says the chronicler, "the sweet and peaceful warnings of the bells were wont to be heard."<sup>2</sup> This is but one specimen of what often occurred ; and it will be easily believed that monasteries were not better treated than secular churches. The Abbeys of Ramsay and Coventry were turned into fortresses, and the monks expelled ; a nunnery at Winchester was burnt, and even the holy Abbey of St. Ethelreda, at Ely, was plundered by these wicked soldiers.<sup>3</sup> No place was safe from them, and the inmates of every monastery might prepare themselves each night at compline, for the possibility of being expelled from their homes before the bell sounded for matins.

All this took place south of the Tees, but the north of England was exposed to the inroads of a terrible enemy, and the ravages inflicted by these savages must have been more painful to Aelred, because they were

<sup>1</sup> Gesta Steph. 946.

<sup>2</sup> Gesta Steph. 948. 958.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. p. 79, 80. Gesta Steph. 960, 964.

let loose upon England by his best friend, David, king of Scotland. The friendship of David for Henry I., and his love for the family of his mother, and for his niece, the Empress, all induced him to take her part against Stephen. Her succession to the throne was looked upon as the restoration of the line of St. Edward to the English throne. King David, with all the barons of England, had sworn to King Henry that he would uphold his daughter, and he would not perjure himself as the others had done. Besides which he laid claim to the earldom of Northumberland for his son Henry. These motives might be enough to call for his invasion, but still it involved an awful responsibility to let loose upon the north the savage Picts. David would have been more like St. Louis had he paused before he put in motion this uncontrollable power ; but he was deceived by the Scottish party among his subjects, who played off his predilection for the Saxon line to urge him on against the Saxons of the north of England. But however this was, in the year 1136, not long after Aelred's conversion, news arrived that the Scottish army was coming over the border. On came the torrent, the chivalry of the Lowlands forming its centre, though far out-numbered by the motley assemblage of half-naked Galwegians, and men of the Isles. The miseries inflicted by a modern army, with all its discipline, are horrible enough, and a feudal army where each man was accounted for, and knew his banner was a scourge wherever it went ; but all this was nothing to the passage of a horde of undisciplined savages, most indifferent Christians at home, and giving loose to every passion which disgraces human nature

abroad. It can only be paralleled with the miseries inflicted by the mercenary troops of the 16th century,<sup>1</sup> when armies were no longer modelled on the feudal principle, and before the modern standing army had been introduced. The commissariat of a Pictish host was doubtless none of the best, and besides this, they had all the wanton cruelty with which the savage loves to torture his victim. It would be wrong to give the sickening detail of their cruelties ; suffice it to say that droves of captive women whom they had made widows and childless, driven before them with spears, formed the van of this horrible army. This mass when once set in motion was beyond the controul of him who had called these uncouth beings out of their native morasses. Churches were burnt and pillaged, and monasteries sacked, in one case, which has happened to remain on record, the poor monks of Calder, in Copeland, were turned out on the wide world, with their whole property contained in a wagon, drawn by eight oxen ; and this was doubtless not a singular instance. The only alleviation to this misery was, that David placed a guard of his own soldiers over Hexham, and all the miserable inhabitants who had taken refuge there. He also gave back into the hands of the Prior of Hexham all that part of the booty of the wretched country which had fallen to his share. Hexham was Aelred's old home, and this probably crossed David's mind when he chose it as a place of sanctuary for Northumberland. One other softer feature amidst this scene of horrors is the circumstance that William, Abbot of Rievaulx, was chosen to give into the hands of the king of Scotland the town of Wark, which belonged to

<sup>1</sup> V. Manzoni, *Promessi Sposi*.

Walter de Espec, the founder of the monastery. In his white habit he might venture in safety as a messenger of peace through the Scottish army ; and it must have been a strange sight to see the Abbot at the head of the haggard inhabitants of the town, who had been reduced by famine to feed on pickled horse-flesh, issuing from the gates to deliver up the keys to the conqueror.

The stream of invaders was rapidly moving on towards Rievaulx, when it was stopped by an event long afterwards celebrated in the annals of border warfare—the battle of the Standard. Aelred's dearest friends, David of Scotland and Henry, were engaged in it, and yet he could not wish them to conquer. Besides, his affections were divided, for on the other side was Walter de Espec, the founder of Rievaulx, his new home, and so from the bottom of his deep-hidden valley he prayed with his brethren for the success of the English arms ; and when it was over he became the chronicler of an action which saved Yorkshire with its churches and monasteries from desolation. It was a very crusade, this war of the Standard, for it was apparently a hopeless task to attempt to stop the progress of the countless swarms which David had brought out of Scotland. But the old Archbishop of York implored the nobles and knights of Yorkshire, for the love of God and His Saints, to venture their lives, to save from desolation the houses of God, and the poor people from all the horrors which were awaiting them. Aelred becomes enthusiastic when he describes the dark hair, broad forehead, and large piercing eyes of Walter de Espec, and details at length the eloquence of the noble soldier when he addressed the soldiers from the foot of the Standard, and promised them

victory, in the name of the Saints and of the Lord. Their standard was a long pole, on which floated the banner of St. Cuthbert, and from which was suspended a pix containing the Body of the Lord ; and under this, they swore to conquer or die. Aelred describes on the day of battle, the small compact body of the English, with their armour glittering in the sun, and their pennons floating on their lances, while the priests in their white albs flew from rank to rank to exhort them. The Bishop of the Orkneys blessed and absolved them, and the whole army answered his benediction with a loud Amen. Then the trumpets sounded, and with a wild shriek the Galwegians came on, but their countless host was broken before the serried ranks of the men-at-arms, around which they closed as the waves dash against the rock, which is islanded amongst them. They might at length have broken this little band, but their headlong valour was rendered useless by the incessant clouds of arrows discharged from the bows of the Yorkshire yeomanry. However at the moment that they were yielding, the battle was again rendered doubtful, for with the speed of lightning Henry, prince of Scotland, charged with the chivalry of the Scottish army ; and here Aelred's love for the friend of his youth betrays itself, and he almost seems to cheer them on as they broke through "the lines of the Southrons as they would sweep aside a cobweb," and pursued them off the field.<sup>1</sup> But still poured on the steady ceaseless showers of the English arrows, and when Henry returned from the pursuit he saw the royal standard, the Dragon, moving off the field in full flight, and found that he was left almost alone with a

<sup>1</sup> De bello Stand. Twysden 345.



few knights about him. And here again amidst his joy for the victory which God had given to the prayers of His church, Aelred pauses to describe the valour of the friend of his youth, how prince Henry, seeing himself left with a few knights about him, turned with a smile to his companions, bade them mingle in the pursuit, as though they were on the English side, and setting spurs to his horse, rode right through the enemy to rejoin his father. This battle freed the north of England from this horrid scourge, and it must be said for David, that when afterwards Northumberland and Durham were ceded to him, the north was resting in peace, while the south was still suffering all the misery of civil war.<sup>1</sup>

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## CHAPTER V.

### *The Cistercian Novice.*

SUCH was the world outside the walls of Rievaulx, during the few years after Aelred first became a monk, and such the world in which he must from his connexion with the court of Scotland have mingled, had he not taken timely refuge in his monastery. Strangely different indeed was his new mode of life from that which he led in the palace of Scone or of Dunfermline. Certainly the good monks of Cîteaux showed no anxiety to sweeten the harshness of the rule for their novices. For four days the new comer was kept like a stranger in the hospice, and no one took notice of

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, i. 22.

him after his first interview with the Abbot ; and then he was introduced into the chapter, where he prostrated himself on the ground before the Abbot, and was saluted by him with an abrupt, "What wouldest thou?" Then was detailed to him the rule in all its rigour, and if he persisted in asking for admission, the Abbot said aloud, "God who hath begun in thee, bring it to the end:" then all the convent answered Amen. Still the candidate was led back to the house of the guests, and the same ceremony was repeated in the chapter for three days, and on the third only was he admitted into the number of the novices. Then his secular dress, the soft clothing of the king's house was taken off him, with the words, "The Lord put off thee the old man with his works." And then the novice's dress was put upon him ; it had not even the dignity of the cuculla and scapular of the full-grown monks ; it was a short tunic with sleeves, and a white cloak with a cowl.<sup>1</sup> If a nobleman were suddenly to find himself arrayed in the dress of a workhouse, the change could not be more complete. But the Abbot as he put it on the novice said, "The Lord put upon thee the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This reconciled Aelred to the change, for in these words were contained the whole of monastic life, and of this all its outward forms were but symbols. Death to nature and life to God, and the carrying out of the vows of baptism, was the moral of the whole. Without this, fast and vigil, rough labour in the fields or beautiful ritual, with vestment of black, brown, white, or grey, were but quaint devices of fantastic devotion, and "friar's trumpery." Alas ! there

<sup>1</sup> Nom. Cist. 218. Rituale Cist. vi. 1.

have been worldly and ambitious hearts, beating beneath the monk's habit, for no outward forms can keep the soul against its will ; but Rievaux was not at all a likely place to harbour such monks. And at all events Aelred, with whom alone we are concerned, looked upon himself as assuming the cross for a life-long crusade against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

“Let the novice begin and leave off labour, read, and go to bed, with the monks ; let him eat the same food, and be clad with the same stuff,” says the rule. We therefore know at once what Aelred was about ; he plunged without delay into Cistercian discipline ; and an exceeding trial it must have been. To any one brought up in a king's palace, the details of husbandry must have been inexpressibly irksome ; and not only must the novice dig, but he must dig well, for the livelihood of the monks depends on their own exertions. The delicate and jewelled fingers, accustomed only to turning over the leaves of illuminated manuscripts, must have been sorely galled with the spade and the fork. This however, together with the whole discipline of fasts and vigils, he must have expected before he came ; the man who has fled for his life to the wilderness must not expect to find its wild and sour fruits like the summer-fruit in a king's garden ; thorns and briars grow in the desert ; we must look elsewhere for lilies and roses. But one thing there was from which human nature recoils most of all : he was not at all treated as the late High Steward of Scotland, one who had made a great present to religion by his change. He was only brother Aelred, the lowest of the novices, because the last comer, last in every thing, except in processions, where, with his short tunic and sleeveless cloak, and his flowing locks, he preceded the long

line of shaven crowns and scapulars, because the lowest walked first. It is a hard thing for one who has been considered rather as teacher than learner all his life, to find himself, when grown up, at the feet of others ; and the years between twenty and thirty are not always the period when men are most docile. The cell of the novices was a portion of the monastery adjoining the cloister, and here they were trained by the master of the novices, an officer who was to teach them to know the Psalter by heart, and to train them in monastic discipline. Aelred could doubtless have instructed this officer in Cicero and in writing Latin, but he submitted to him with the docility of a child, for he knew well that the science of spiritual things required no learning or intellectual power.

When he had a little recovered from his bewilderment at the novelty of his situation, and found leisure to look about him, he was struck with the wonderful peace of this little cloister-world, the noiseless gliding motion of the brethren, as they bent their heads in silence when they passed each other in the cloisters, and the strange way in which one soul seemed to actuate this vast body. And this was what first struck our novice ; it was good hard work in which they were engaged, and yet “with such a placid unruffled countenance, with such a holy noiseless order, did they do all things, that scarce did they seem to move at all.”<sup>1</sup> And then their mysterious preternatural silence had something awful about it ; for it was very unlike a dogged or sullen silence, and this was evident from the bright beaming countenances of the brethren, and the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. Petri de Roya at the end of St. Bernard's Letters, ed. Ben.

ready cheerfulness in which they helped one another in their respective works. No man seemed to have a will of his own ; and Aelred thought that he had seen at last the realization of his dreams of friendship. At first, amongst such a number all seemed to him very much alike ; all had the same white habit, and even the same cast of countenance ; just as in a foreign country, till the eye gets accustomed to the type of the new race, all seem equally dark or equally fair, without much difference. By degrees however he learned to distinguish between the countenances about him, and one in particular struck him. It was the face of a man, much younger than those of equal rank in the monastery with himself, which showed that he must have been hardly more than a child when he took the vow. The grave sweetness of his face, and the depth of the recollection and silence of the young monk struck Aelred ; and he learned (probably from the master of the novices, whose business it was at times to converse with his charge,) that the monk's name was Simon, and that his conversion was a miracle of God's grace. As a mere boy, God had called him away from his kindred and his home, to serve Him as a monk. What the circumstances were are not known ; probably Aelred did not know them himself ; he only knew that Simon was of noble blood, and had left his father's house. Men wondered what could attract him in monastic life at that early age ; " but He knew, says Aelred,<sup>1</sup> who was leading thee on, who had set on fire thy yet tender heart with the flame of His love, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments.<sup>2</sup> He went before thee, beautiful in form above

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. i. 34.<sup>2</sup> Song of Solomon, i. 3.

the sons of men, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments. He went before thee, that One who was lowly in spirit, over the steeps and over the mountains, sprinkling thy path with the fragrance of myrrh and frankincense, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments. Before thee a Child went, the Child Jesus, showing thee the manger of His poverty, the couch of His lowliness, the chamber of His love, filled with the flowers of His grace, and sprinkled with the unguent of His consolation, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments." Such was Aelred's way of accounting for the strange fact that a place, like Rievaulx, possessed attractions for such a child ; and now in the beginning of his noviciate, he found it of use to look upon this monk, who was utterly unconscious of the admiration which he was exciting. When his eyes and his thoughts wandered in the choir, one glance at the modest face of Simon chaunting devoutly with his eyes fixed on the ground was enough to recall him to himself. There was no danger in this mute veneration and love, for Cistercian strictness forbade his addressing Simon, and it was of use to him to choose this youthful monk for his model. "The rule of the order," says he, "forbade our speaking, but his countenance spoke to me, his gait spoke, and his very silence spoke. The sight of his humility beat down my pride, this contemplation of his calmness repressed my restless spirit."

After a year of probation, novices were admitted to make their profession : this was the real farewell to the world, where was made the vow of obedience, of stability, and of conversion of life according to the rule of St. Benedict. For a year before, the novice had

counted the cost, and now he felt sure that by God's grace he could keep what it was beyond the strength of the natural man to do. It was with a chastened and a holy joy that Aelred now bent before the Abbot to receive his benediction as a monk. And well he might rejoice, for to him had been given a grace, which but very few could possess. The world must go on, bad as it is, till it please God to destroy it, and in its miserable service must toil on even the good till its end. But Aelred, God had called out of the world, and had made it lawful for him to quit the distractions of the painful scene, and to serve Him not indirectly through actions in themselves indifferent, but like the angels with perpetual acts of prayer and praise. The whole was the act of God's grace, and therefore the hymn for Whitsuntide, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, was then always sung by the convent, and the beautiful ritual every where prays to the Holy Spirit, who alone with the Father and Son is the Giver of all grace, and without whom nothing is strong and holy. And then after the long hair which the novice had till that moment kept, as he would wear it in the world, had been cut off his head by the Abbot, and he was dressed in the regular monastic garment, he went round the convent and humbled himself at the feet of each of his brethren. After which the *Te Deum* was entoned, and whilst it was sung, the newly made monk knelt behind the Abbot, his hands crossed on his breast within the sleeves of his habit. From this time forth he took his place in the choir with the other monks.

Henceforth, even during the stormy time which we described in the last chapter, so peaceful was the tenor of his life, that hardly any thing is known of Aelred, but all that remains of him is of the same

cast as has gone before. He is still the same gentle, loving Aelred, under the white habit, as he had been in the world. When he sat in the Abbey garden, as he says himself, his chief delight was to look about him, and think that each of the mute white figures, walking among the trees, was a brother, and to wonder how it was possible that so many men of different countries, tempers and ages, could dwell together in such perfect peace. If they did not talk, they had no chance of quarrelling, is doubtless a ready answer ; and yet Aelred was right, it was a phenomenon. Men will manage to quarrel, if they have a mind ; and besides, monks and nuns did find ample opportunities of discord, whenever it suited them ; and it was this quarrelsomeness, and not other sins more commonly ascribed to them, which was the besetting sin of convents. Cluny had been not long before split into parties under Abbot Pontius ; and even Cistercians, alas ! in after times must needs call in the judgments of popes and legates to settle their internal dissensions. It is evident that monks when they lose the spirit of their order must be quarrelsome. The very object of Monasticism is to give a proper outlet to devotional feelings, which are stifled in the world, because it would be fanatical to indulge them ; it must therefore be made up to a great extent of external actions. To throw oneself at the feet of another, and call oneself a miserable sinner, in a convent is a part of the rule. But when such actions are done by cold-hearted or discontented men, they become technical and formal ; and punctilious persons are ever most disposed to quarrel. Besides, there might be proud brethren even amidst the austerities of Citeaux ; and let any one consider the heart-burnings of an ambitious monk, when brother so-and-so was made Prior or Sub-



prior over his head, or was sent on a mission, or allowed to accompany the Abbot to the general chapter ; it was enough to sour a whole convent. Again, it is not quite true that monks never spoke to each other. A perfect silence is enjoined by the rule at certain times ; especially from compline to prime next morning, at refectory, in church and in the cloister, not a word was spoken under severe penalties ; but this implies that there was a less strict silence at other times. When at work, monks might speak to each other, if it was necessary for what they were about. An awkward monk might be reproved by his fellow, or they might differ in opinion, and any one who has tried, may know how hard it is to yield simply for the sake of peace. Aelred therefore was perfectly right in wondering how a large convent of three hundred monks, for such was the number of the brethren of Rievaulx, could hold on its even course without bickerings and quarrels ! Sometimes Aelred had a specimen of a slight fit of ill temper, just to assure him that such things were possible ;<sup>1</sup> but if monks would be cross, they had also their own way of smoothing crossness down. One day, he spoke a word which offended one of the brethren, and at once he fell at his feet to beg his pardon, and waited there till the monk raised him up. And this seems to have been the established conventual method of settling a dispute.<sup>2</sup>

Besides which, it appears that license was sometimes given by Abbots to certain of the brethren to converse together ;<sup>3</sup> and in this way Aelred at length was

<sup>1</sup> De Spir. Ami. ii. 453.

<sup>2</sup> Spec. Char. i. 29.

<sup>3</sup> See note to Life of St. Stephen, p. 140 ; to which add Spec. Char. iii. 40.

allowed to speak to Simon, the young monk, whom he had from the first proposed as his model. It is curious that the Cistercians do not seem to have been so jealous of particular friendships in their communities as were other orders. It was a first principle in monastic life that each individual should devote himself body and mind to the service of his brethren. The monastic system was an expansion of the love of the domestic circle upon a large community ; it was a supernatural home raised by Christianity out of man's natural affections, an expansion of the narrowed sphere of usefulness allowed to most men in the world. It was necessary then that all within that circle should share this love alike. In a large family, if not carefully brought up, the eldest often know little of the youngest ; they naturally form into knots, and the petty factions quarrel with each other. And so it would be in a monastery, which is only a very large family, if the father Abbot was not watchful to prevent an evil, which every careful mother would banish from her home. Thus, if brother Ambrose and brother Benedict were to swear a deathless friendship, and to put their black cowls together in recreation-time, and never talk to any one else, the other brethren might well think themselves aggrieved. And if the same brethren were to proceed also to sit together in cloister, and to nod and wink, when they could not talk, if they were discontented and cross when the Prior set them to work in different parts of the grounds of the monastery, then the father Abbot would have just cause for punishing the refractory brethren. Human love, if not submitted to rules, is a wayward, fantastic, moon-struck thing, flitting from object to object, and never satisfied ; or if fixed upon one in a wrong way, over-

leaping the bounds of law, human and divine. It is like an organ of which every fool may take out the trumpet stop, and bring forth a volume of wild discordant sounds ; but which, when played by rule, discourses most healthful music. Now in a Cistercian monastery, at least at the period when Aelred entered Rievaulx, this same unmanageable element was subjected to such stringent rules that there was little danger of its doing mischief. Where there was no regular recreation-time, and where the brethren never conversed but by license from the father Abbot, and those licenses were few and far between, there was no danger that the spirit of exclusiveness should creep into a convent, for the brethren could not possibly form cabals amongst themselves. No ambitious monk could form a party and intrigue to be elected Abbot ; no harm could come to monastic discipline by heart-burnings and jealousies, breaking out at length into open rebellion, from being long brooded over, when the cowl was drawn over the head, and none could see the workings of the discontented heart upon the face. Aelred could therefore love Simon without fixing his heart upon him with a merely natural friendship. In the painful struggle with himself, before he quitted the world, his affections had been crucified, and they could now revive and flourish again in the cloister. The period of his internal struggles was a long and cheerless winter, during which his heart was "like a tree withered down to its roots. But now that this winter was past, and that all was dead that God would have had die, then came the happy springtide and all revived." That took place in him which we will describe in the words of our old friend the Archbishop of Cambray, for we are not skilled in spiritual matters

ourselves. "God then gives back friendship with all his other gifts an hundred-fold. Then revive all the old loves for true friends. A man no longer loves them in himself, and for himself, but in God, and for God, and that with a love, lively, tender, full of sweetness and of feeling, for God can easily purify feeling. It is not feeling but self-love which corrupts friendship." So Aelred gave himself up without scruple to his holy friendship, for it was God, who by the order of His Providence, bound them together, and inspired them with His love ; and it was Him whom they loved in each other.<sup>1</sup>

Aelred's talents and his loving disposition did not escape the penetrating eye of Abbot William. The friend of St. Bernard could not but love one, whom posterity, by a sort of unconscious judgment, has called "a second Bernard ;" so he made him the master of the novices. Next to the Abbot this was the most important officer in the convent. His business, as has been said before, was to train the novices in monastic discipline, that is, not to teach them to chant Gregorian tones, to march in procession, no, nor even to fast, and to rise in the night to sing psalms. All these were but means to an end ; his business was to form a character in them. The method of forming a Christian character has now been almost reduced to a science, for the ways of God in His dealings with the souls of His elect, have so much uniformity, with all their variety, that a science of spiritual life has been framed out of the reflections of holy men on their own experience. This science has now spread far and wide, and forms a regular portion of clerical education in

<sup>1</sup> Fenelon, *Utilité des peines et des délaissements*, 23.

most parts of Christendom ; but in Aelred's time it was almost confined to the cloister. Very little had been written on the subject till St. Bernard's time, for in early times these Christian writers had been so occupied with the great object of faith itself, that they had comparatively little analyzed the dealings of God's grace with the Christian soul. The cloister then was a sort of traditionary system of ascetic discipline, and this was what the Cistercians had revived through the influence of St. Bernard. Aelred's duty was thoroughly to learn the character of the novice, to support him in heaviness of spirits, to temper his enthusiasm, to judge of his vocation, and if he saw that God had called him to that state of life, to present him at the end of his year of probation to the Abbot. The whole of Aelred's teaching consisted in patience and resignation to the will of God. When first the young novice came into the monastery full of fervour, he was delighted and edified with all he saw. Even the rough bed and coarse food, and the bell bidding him start up when his sleep was sweetest, were all but child's play to him ; the awful silence did not frighten him, and though he could but speak to three men, the Abbot, the prior, and the master, all seemed natural and easy to him.<sup>1</sup> Every thing struck him with admiration, but above all, the wonderful concord of the brethren. "Such unity is there among the brethren," said a wondering novice to Aelred, "that each thing belongs to all, and all things to each. And what marvellously pleases me, there is no acceptation of persons, no account of high birth. How wonderful is it too that the will of one man

<sup>1</sup> Tribus solum hominibus et hoc rarissime et vix de necessariis loquimur. Spec. Char. lib. ii. 17.

should be the law to about three hundred men, so that what once he has spoken, is kept by all, as if they had come to precisely that determination themselves, or had heard it from the mouth of God Himself." This was the first stage of feeling in the novices, and the prudent master of the novices was obliged with a smile to tell him, <sup>1</sup>"I would have thee be cautious, and not suppose that any profession upon earth is without its hypocrites, lest if thou shouldest see any one transgress in word or deed, thou shouldest disturb thyself, as though something strange had happened to thee." And to this first ecstatic stage of wonderment succeeded generally a great calm, when the soul was conscious of no feeling at all, when there was no sensible pleasure in prayer, no tears in contemplating the Passion, or ecstasy in thinking on the love of God. And then the poor novice wondered why he did not feel now that he was in religion, the same sensible joys that he used to feel when in the world. Then Aelred would tell him that the love of God did not consist in sensible joys, but in the junction of the will to the will of God, in the surrender of the human will so that it consents to wish for nothing but because God wills it. "Pure love is in the will alone, so that it is not a love of feeling, for the imagination has no part in it ; it is a love which loves without feeling, as pure faith believes without seeing."<sup>2</sup> He told him that it was a greater sacrifice thus to offer up the will to God, and to remain quietly as long as He would in this want of feeling, than to fast and afflict the body with austerities, and that nothing was so agreeable to God as to remain

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Fenelon sur la secheresse et les distractions, 26.

thus crucified, not seeking for consolation till it was His will to give it. "These sensible consolations were given at the beginning of thy repentance," he would say to the novice, "to draw thee on to Christ; but what wonder if, now their work is done, they are taken away? now is the time for warfare, not for rest, but by and bye, it may be that the Lord will restore these sensible affections, and thus that devout feeling, which at first roused thee, to save thee from perishing, will console thee in thy labour, lest thou sink under it, till after many victories, the pains by which thou art, now in thy noviciate, harassed, will be entirely lulled, and then, like a soldier, whose warfare is done, thou wilt taste the sweets of repose, and be admitted to that consolation of which the Prophet speaks, 'How great is Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee.'"<sup>1</sup>

This is a specimen which has reached us of Aelred's teaching as master of the novices. Doubtless he had many more unpromising novices to deal with than that one whom he has here recorded. Doubtless he had the presumptuous novice, who thought nothing too high for him, who must needs think the order not half strict enough, and would separate himself from his brethren by fasting and watching when the others did not.<sup>2</sup> To this one he would say that strict obedience was the first condition of being a monk at all. Sometimes however he had still more refractory subjects to deal with, and a story remains, which, though it does not rest on very good authority, yet shows the sort of character which tradition assigned to Aelred. There was a clerk, says the legend, who, when he had been a short time at

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. lib. ii. 19.      <sup>2</sup> St. Bern. Serm. in Cant. 19.

Rievaux, began to grow tired of the strictness and monotony of the place, and determined to run away and go back to the world. Aelred, however, loved him and begged of God to give him this soul. So the poor novice came to him, and frankly said, that he was going to run away, but Aelred coolly replied, "Brother, ruin not thyself; nevertheless thou canst not if thou wouldst." Still the man would not listen to reason, and went away from the monastery. He plunged into the woods, and wandered about among the mountain paths from valley to valley, thinking all the while that he was going very far from the Abbey. About sunset, however, he was surprised to find himself close to a convent, which looked marvellously like the Abbey of Rievaux, and sure enough so it was; he had been wandering round and round it all day, and at evening he found himself precisely where he had started. It had been hidden from him by the thick woods about it. This circumstance struck him as so wonderful that he could only see the hand of God in it. So he entered again the monastery which he had quitted, he thought for ever, in the morning. The first person whom he saw was Aelred, who fell on his neck and bursting into tears, kissed him, and said, "Son, why hast thou done so to me? Lo! I have wept for thee with many tears; and I trust in God that as I have asked of the Lord, and as I told thee, thou shalt not perish."



## CHAPTER VI.

*The Spirit of Citeaux.*

ÆLRED, however, soon had other employment assigned him ; he was compelled by his Abbot to turn author.<sup>1</sup> It appears that certain monks of other orders censured the Cistercians as being dry, formal, unspiritual men ; devotion they thought was incompatible with so much affliction of the body, hard beds, coarse food and manual labour. Theirs was a more smiling religion, which had all the arts at her command, painting, sculpture, and music ; and why should the Cistercians be more strict than their neighbours ? Now this accusation could hardly be made in France, where St. Bernard was taken as a type of the Cistercians, for dry and formal were the very last epithets that could be applied to him. No one could read a line of his writings without feeling their unction and sweetness.<sup>2</sup> As for his decisions in casuistry some might have called him lax, so fully does he hold that a really conscientious intention supplies material defects. None could therefore with any face accuse the French Cistercians of an unspiritual harshness. In England, the new order wanted some one to be its type in the same way, and Aelred was chosen as being the very man to set it forth.<sup>3</sup> Much did he pray to be excused ; he said that he was ill educated, had left school early, and had come straight from a king's kitchen to the desert, where,

<sup>1</sup> V. Ep. cujusdam prefixed to the Speculum, and Spec. Char. lib. ii. 5.      <sup>2</sup> V. Ep. 69, 603.      <sup>3</sup> V. Ep. cujusdam.

like a common peasant, he worked for his daily bread among rocks and mountains with the axe and the mallet, by the sweat of his brow. Nothing however would do, the Abbot only chid his tardiness in obedience, and said that his stewardship in a king's kitchen was only an anticipation of the time when he was to be a steward of spiritual food to his brethren ; and as for rocks and mountains, there might come honey from the stony rock, and more was to be learnt under the shade of the trees at mid-day in the woods about Rievaux than in the schools of worldly philosophy. So write a book he must. It was to be called the *Mirror of Charity*, in which the form of Christian love was to be reflected as in a glass. Hugh, the Prior, had often heard him talk on such subjects, and knew that he was the very man. So Aelred was deputed to write, and a remarkable book it is, considering the time at which it was brought out, while the Scotch were at the gates of Rievaux, during a civil war, in which an empress lost and won a throne, and a king was in prison. When all the world was in arms, bishops and all ; when monasteries were in flames, and cathedrals were turned into castles, this monk was sitting quietly in his cloister, writing on the love of God.

It was a perfect reflection of the Cistercian spirit this *Mirror of Charity*, and a good comment upon its code of laws, the *Chart of Charity*. The aim of the Cistercian reform was to introduce a more spiritual religion into the cloister. Monks had begun to expend their religious feelings in the externals of devotion. The eleventh century had been a time of deadly struggle with the powers of the world ; its great men were men of action like St. Gregory, and its good monks were half hermits, like St. Peter Damian. It

was a time of travail and of labour, for the old world was gone, and the new middle age world was in process of formation. Men were just recovering from the wild fright into which the close of the first thousand years of the Christian era had thrown them ; their panic had broken out in frantic gestures, so that men and women danced<sup>1</sup> hand in hand over the graves in the churchyard like the dances of death in the fifteenth century. And after their recovery they took to building churches, it was the first sign of revival, the fashionable religion, so to speak, of the day. Men and women formed themselves into companies, and marched together to the building of a new church, with banners carried before them. Knights and nobles yoked themselves to carts to carry stones to the new edifice. The utmost splendour of worship of course was the natural consequence of the erection of these splendid edifices, for lofty naves and beautiful choirs were not built to be left in nakedness like vast sepulchres. Images of saints and angels, in all the warmth of colour and gilding, peopled them on high,<sup>2</sup> and the long train of splendid vestments moved in glittering order amongst the worshippers. This was all as it should be in secular churches, nay, it was well even in monasteries if this graceful and glowing external life of religion was not too busy for the interior and hidden life of the soul. The two schools need not have clashed, but that they did so is certain, for these ancient monasteries found fault with the new school, which arose amongst them on the grounds that there was a real opposition between an austere life and spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Fordun, vii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Quo sanctior eo coloratio St. Bern. Apol. ad Guil.

joy, and that a splendid external religion was essential to internal devotion. They were perhaps conscious that it was so in themselves, and so they attacked their younger brethren, telling them that joyousness and love were essential to religion, and were incompatible with the great austerities which they practised.

Aelred's *Mirror of Charity* therefore is intended to reflect an image of the love of God, the conception of which had been so strangely disfigured. "The love of God," he says, "is the Holy Spirit within us." Considered as a habit in our souls, it is a perfect union of our will with that of God, so that we wish for nothing but what He wishes. It is not feeling, it is not intellect, it is not joy, it is not reasoning ; it is this ineffable union with God, who is not an idea, but a real living God, the source of all joy and all intellect. As man however has fallen, this love must be raised out of the death of nature, and this was the reason of the Cistercian austerities ; they were means to an end, to set up the cross of Christ within the soul, and they were useful as far as they procured the perfect resignation of the will. And how can this be effected, asks the Cistercian, where all things tend to dissipate the mind and expend its energies on external things, when in the cloister are found picturesque animals to amuse the eyes of the brethren ; quails and curious birds, tame hares gambolling about, and stags browsing under the trees.<sup>1</sup> There is the same dissipation when the walls of monastic churches are covered with paintings of men and horses fighting, and pagan stories taken from classic history, when the pavement is of marble, covered with rich carpets, and the worship is carried on with a glare of

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 23, 24.

wax lights, amid the glitter of gold and silver vessels ; or when again, instead of the grave and masculine Gregorian chants, languid and effeminate music was used, or else the loud organ imitated the crash of thunder to the wonder of the gaping crowd below. "Meanwhile," says Aelred, "the crowd stands trembling and astonished, wondering at the sound of the bellows, the clash of cymbals, the harmony of pipes, yet when they look at the contortions of the singers and their imitation of female voices, they cannot help laughing. You would fancy that they had come not to an oratory, but to a theatre, not to pray, but to a spectacle. They fear not that tremendous majesty near which they are brought, they have no reverence for that mystic manger, at which they are ministering, where Christ is mystically wrapt in swaddling-clothes, where His most sacred blood is poured in the chalice, where the heavens are opened and angels are standing near, where earthly things are joined with heavenly, and men are the companions of angels."

The love of God consists not in these external things ; it does not consist even in the joys of the interior life, but in the conformity of the soul with the passion of Christ, in the crucifixion of the whole man. The soul must patiently wait upon Him, not forcing itself to feel joy and sorrow, but resting in faith upon God, ready to be filled with His joys, when He wills, and willing to remain in spiritual dryness as long as He wills. "Nevertheless," says Aelred, <sup>1</sup>"who so presumptuous as to affirm that communion with the passion of Christ is incompatible with His Spirit, and lessens the grace of spiritual sweetness. He is joined to Christ's passion,

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 6.

who bows himself beneath the discipline of the cloister, and mortifies his flesh by fasts, labour, and watchings, who submits his will to another's judgment," and who, when tried by internal temptations, which are more severe than any corporal mortifications, commits himself into the hands of the Lord to suffer what He wills. He must not be ever looking out for miracles to prove his acceptance as was the case with many in those days, he must wait quietly for consolation from on high.<sup>1</sup>

2 "But when the soul is in this state, beset with fear, harassed with grief, cast down by despair, swallowed up by sadness, grieved by spiritual sluggishness, there will come down upon it a drop of wondrous sweetness, from the unguent of that copious mountain, that high-raised mountain : noiselessly and peacefully it drops down upon the soul. At the brightness of its radiant light, all that cloud of irrational feelings melts away ; before its sweet taste, all bitterness disappears, the heart expands, the hungry soul is fed, and it feels within it a strange upward power, which seems to bear it on high. Thus by fear sloth is kept away ; and by the taste of heavenly sweetness, fear is tempered. Lest the soul should be content to remain in a low and sluggish state, fear rouses it ; but if it faints in its labours, it is sustained by its feeling. By these alternations it is continually schooled, till the whole soul, absorbed by that ineffable love, burning for the long-desired embrace of Him who is fairer than the children of men, begins to wish to be dissolved and to be with Christ.<sup>3</sup> But know well that, if ever the mercy of Thy Creator pour upon thee a single drop of His sweetness, it depends not on thy will, when it should come to

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 15.

thee, nor in what way, nor how much thou canst keep of it. When thou hast tasted this spiritual sweetness, be not straightway sunk down in sloth, for soon there will rise up by thy side a spiritual enemy, and he is not to be conquered by sloth, but by prayers. Then after numberless contests, thou shalt be taken on high to receive thy reward, and thy soul will enter into the glory of God, where thou wilt be fed with the fruit of the promises. The fire of heavenly love will burn up the yoke of earthly concupiscence, and thou shalt rest in the brightness of wisdom, in the sweetness of heavenly contemplation, and know of a truth that the yoke of the Lord is sweet and his burden light."

Such was Aelred's doctrine, and he had soon need enough of resignation to the will of God, for while he was engaged in writing this work, his friend Simon died. So full is he of his grief that he quits his subject, and pours his heart out in expressions of grief. His mirror of charity is a home-book ; it was meant for the cloister, and for brethren to read. In one place he tells us that he had offended one of the brethren in the morning, and how the thought of it grieved him. And now that he had lost his friend, it seems to have been a relief to him to put all his thoughts on paper. For eight years Simon had been suffering from ill health ; and for a whole year, foreseeing that his end was approaching, he had withdrawn within himself, and seemed forgetful of all external things, "even of me," says Aelred. It appears that he had been sent away from Rievaulx, probably for his health, and Aelred was not with him when he died. His body however was brought to his own monastery, and Aelred had just come from his funeral, when he wrote these words, "O grave, where is thy victory ? O death, where is thy

sting ? Where thou seemest to have done him some hurt, there thou hast exalted him. Upon me then has all thy venom been expended, and in aiming at him, thou hast inflicted dreadful wounds upon me. It is on me, that has fallen all the grief, all the bitterness, all the sorrow ; for the guide of my path, the rule of my conversation has been taken from me. But how is it, O my soul, that thou didst so long look upon the funeral of thy sweet friend without tears ? Why didst thou let that beloved body go without kissing it ? I was in sorrow, and with sobs I drew long sighs from my breast, but I did not weep. The object before me called for such intense grief, that I thought that I did not grieve at all, even when my grief was most violent ; at least so I can tell on looking back. So great was the stupor of my mind that I could not believe that he was dead, even when I saw his body was laid out for burial. But now that stupor has given way to feeling, to grief, and suffering. And are my tears blameable ? Why should I be ashamed of them ? Am I the only one to weep ? Tears, groans, and sobs are all about me. But Thy tears, O Lord Jesus, are the excuse for ours, those tears which Thou didst shed for the death of Thy friend, expressing a human feeling, and proving to us Thy charity. Thou didst put on, O Lord, the feeling of our infirmity, but it was, when Thou wouldest ; therefore Thou mightest have not wept. Oh ! how sweet are Thy tears, how grateful ! how they console me ! How they drop with sweetness on my harassed soul ! Behold, say they, how He loved him. Yea, behold ! how my Simon was loved by all, was embraced by all, was cherished by all."

Truly the white monks were not an hard-hearted race, as appears from this touching picture of a monk's



funeral. The world does not so regret its friends, at least if we may judge from the cold, heartless things that funerals are. But we must now accompany Aelred a little way into this same world to another death-bed. It was one of bitter grief to him, and yet it had its comfort too. We have all this while lost sight of the Saxon priest with whom we began this narrative, Eillan, Aelred's father, the priest of Hexham ; and it is only by accident that a document has been preserved to us, from which it appears that Eillan was taken ill at Durham, and repenting on his death-bed of the unlawful possession which he kept of the property of Hexham, sent for the prior of the canons, and also for Aelred and two other sons, whose names are thus known to have been Samuel and Ethelwold. William, Abbot of Rievaulx, also came, and in their presence, and with the consent of his sons, he formally gave up into the hands of the prior all the lands of the Abbey which he had kept ; and in token of this donation, he gave Robert a silver cross, containing part of the relics of the Saints of Hexham. Probably Aelred's consent, with that of his brothers, was necessary to make this transaction legal, and it must have been with joy that by this renunciation, he cleared his family of the guilt of sacrilege, which had so long hung over them. His father, when his illness grew worse, took the monastic habit in the Abbey of Durham. "He lived a few days longer in strict self-examination, contrition of heart, and mourning for his sins, and after having received the body of the Lord to help him in his passage from life to death, he breathed his last."

This glimpse of Aelred on the brink of his father's grave, is the last which we catch of him as a simple monk of Rievaulx. It took place in 1138, which was

the year of the battle of the Standard. When we meet him again it will be in another capacity.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *The World in the Church.*

AND now we must again quit the cloister and go forth into the world, and this time it will not be the noisy world of knights and barons which was battling outside the walls of Rievaulx, but the ecclesiastical world, in which a more deadly war was waged during that part of Aelred's life which remains. It will thus appear what dangers Aelred escaped by taking refuge in the haven of the cloister from the sea of ecclesiastical politics. It will also be seen how necessary to the church was a reform like the Cistercian, of which one of the first principles was to give up the politics of the world, and by which Abbots were forbidden to become judges, and to frequent courts of law, or even, except in particular cases, to hold communication with the court of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

A struggle was now beginning different in character from any which had gone before. In the former contests, there appear Saints on the one side, and the world on the other. But here we have civilians and

<sup>1</sup> V. Inst. cap. Gen. part i. c. 58, de placitis and 84, Nullus scribat domino Papæ nisi pro propriis causis et coabbatum suorum et episcoporum, archiepiscoporum, regum et principum suorum. No privileges were to be obtained from the Holy See by particular Abbots, c. 31.

canonists, men of business and politicians among churchmen, as well as in the world. Law comes in instead of broad principle, or rather principle takes the shape of law. Nearly at the same time two young monarchs ascended the thrones of England and of Germany, Henry and Frederic. Both were remarkable men. Henry was a good specimen of the Plantagenet race ; never would his restless soul leave his body quiet. All day long he was on his feet, whatever he was doing, whether at mass or at council ; although his legs frequently gave him pain from the many kicks which he received from the fiery chargers which he bestrode.<sup>1</sup> He hardly ever sat down but on horseback, the saddle was his only throne ; from one part to another of his vast dominions he hurried, rolling everywhere his dove-like, deceitful eyes. But if any thing aroused his anger, then it was terrible to look upon him, for his large round eyes seemed to shoot fire on all around him. Not so his imperial majesty ; inexorable and inflexible he was ; so that on the very day of coronation at Aix-la-chapelle, one who had offended him fell at his feet in the very cathedral, thinking that then kings' hearts are disposed to mercy, but he turned away, and would not look at him.<sup>2</sup> When the clergy of Tortona quitted the beleaguered town with cross and banner, and came to him in procession with naked feet to beg for mercy, he was unruffled and undisturbed, and sent them back with a bitter smile, to live on horseflesh or to die of famine.<sup>3</sup> Still he does not seem to have had the terrible fits of passion which burst forth from Henry. He was an indefatigable warrior like

<sup>1</sup> Peter of Blois, Ep. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Otto, de Gestis Frid. ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Otto, ii. 19.

Henry ; but it is not clad in mail and on horseback that we think of him, it is rather seated on his throne on the plains of Roncaglia, dispensing kingdoms with a sword, and provinces with a banner.<sup>1</sup> The sceptre suits best his imperial hand, as the sword, the large, hard ungloved hand of Henry.<sup>2</sup> Pride was the besetting sin of the Hohenstauffen, and passion of the Plantagenet.

Yet however different they were, they agreed in this : both were men of law and zealous administrators of justice, and both endeavoured to swallow up the church in their reforms. Henry's aim was to extend justice through his dominions by means of his new division of circuits and judges. Frederic's was rather to centralize justice and to make himself its head across the Alps, as he had done in Germany. His aim was wider than Henry's ; it extended through all the intricate details of fiefs and arriere-fiefs : the maxims which he studied were those of the imperial court of Constantinople. They involved a theory broad and comprehensive, taking into its extensive range, not only Germany and Italy, but all the world. Wide as was the theory of Innocent III., that of Frederic Barbarossa was its match without its religiousness. Of the two swords given to St. Peter, he claimed one, as the Head of the Church claimed the other, using the same text, without reflecting that he spoiled the illustration, for he at least could not be the successor of the Apostle. Frederic claimed his throne as the successor of Charle-

<sup>1</sup> Est consuetudo curiæ ut regna per gladium, provinciæ per vexillum tradantur. Otto, ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Nunquam, nisi aves deferat, utitur chirothecis. Peter of Blois, Ep. 66.

magne. The old Roman empire was by no means supposed to be dead ; it was considered to be continued in Constantinople, and Charlemagne claimed it on the ground that the Imperial line of Constantinople had failed, and it was time that the empire should return to the West.<sup>1</sup> When afterwards Frederic passed by Constantinople on his way to the East, he would not meet the Greek Emperor, for he was himself the Emperor of Rome ; his Eastern majesty was but the Emperor of New Rome. Head of the Holy Roman empire was his title, and his obsequious prelates were not afraid of the utmost conclusions, which such a title would warrant.<sup>2</sup> Sole Emperor of the world is one of the titles by which the Archbishop of Milan addresses him in a speech delivered on the Roncaglia. Even kings acknowledged his greatness : our own Henry says in a letter to him, “let the will of the Empire be done wherever our dominion extends.”<sup>3</sup> It is true that Henry had a point to gain, and words it is well known cost nothing to him, whom a cardinal legate once called the greatest liar he had ever known ; still they must have meant something, not to appear preposterous.

But the great support of Frederic were his legists of Bologna.<sup>4</sup> One day the emperor was riding on a fine horse with two great Doctors of law one on each side of him, Doctor Bulgarus and Doctor Martin, and he asked them whether he was by right lord of the world. Master Bulgarus answered that he was not, as far as the property of it went ; but the cautious Martin said that he was. “Then the lord emperor,” says the

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave's Anglo-Saxon Constitution, p. 490. 506.

<sup>2</sup> Radevic. Frising, ii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Radevic. i. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Baronius in ann. 1158.

chronicle, "when he came down from his palfrey, presented it to Martin." Here in the introduction of Doctor Martin and his colleagues we have the characteristic of the whole contest in Germany as well as in England. William Rufus had summary methods of proceeding, rude and simple modes of spoliation ; but Henry was a more refined tyrant ; he set up for a lover of justice and a reformer of law, and so he was, when it suited him. Besides brute force, for that was not wanting too, he fought with appeals, and sentences of suspension and excommunication. But the times were not ready for so much refinement ; it was only the commencement of the new system, and he had to spill the blood of a martyr before he had done. The struggle however between Church and State in England had not reached its height in Aelred's time, and it is not mentioned by him in his writings ; while that between Frederic and the Church is known to have occupied his attention. We will therefore cross over to the continent and see how the chief ecclesiastics of the day, the spiritual rulers of Christendom, were employed, while Aelred was serving God in peace at Rievaulx.

There was something great about Frederic ; when he crossed the Alps, to extend his power over Italy, he declared that he came not as a conqueror, but as a lawgiver ; his speech to the diet was a noble one,<sup>1</sup> and his attempt to pacify the deadly feuds of the cities was praiseworthy. He gave a written feudal law to Italy which it had not known before ; but he committed the same fault as Henry. The church was to be centralized and drawn within the circle of the empire ; the property of the sees to be treated like that of the baron as imperial fiefs, inalienable without the

<sup>1</sup> Radevic. Frising, ii. 3.

consent of the emperor, the lord of the soil. And in all this it is remarkable how the civilian every where comes into the contest ; instead of the old and dignified watch-words of the contest, investiture by ring and sceptre, or by pastoral staff, there now appears all the jargon of feudal finance, *fodrum*,<sup>1</sup> and regalia, fiefs and allodial lands. The spirit of the struggle was however the same as we shall see as it goes on. Even in the time of Eugenius differences arose between the aged pontiff and the young monarch. Frederic had constituted himself the arbiter between rival candidates for the see of Magdeburg, a dispute which an ecclesiastical tribunal only was competent to decide. Eugenius died before the matter could be settled, and his successor Anastasius was weak enough to concede the point. It was a bad lesson for Frederic ; it destroyed the awe that men had for the inflexibility of the Holy See in a just cause.

Such was the state of affairs when Anastasius died after a short pontificate ; and Hadrian IV. succeeded him in the See of St. Peter. It was a joyful day for England when news came that the cardinal Bishop of Albano was supreme Pontiff, for he was an Englishman, of genuine Saxon blood, Nicholas Breakspear. He was the son of a man in a low rank of life, who became a monk of St. Alban's. The boy was brought up in the cloister, but when he became a candidate for the noviciate, the Abbot would not receive him. It was not every one who could be admitted into the lordly Abbey of St. Alban's. Much however could not be said for the discernment of Abbot Robert, for the next meeting which he had with the poor Saxon boy, was when he came to Rome on the business of his Abbey, and found

<sup>1</sup> *Fodrum* means the duty of supporting the Imperial army.

his rejected novice in the chair of St. Peter. The Abbot brought with him a considerable sum of money, with three mitres, and sandals worked by Christina, prioress of Margate. But Pope Adrian would not receive the money ; he said with a good-humoured smile, "I will not accept thy gifts, for once on a time thou wouldest not have me for thy monk, when I came to beg the habit of thee in all charity." Since he had left St. Alban's, he had become prior of the canons of St. Rufus, and then as cardinal legate of the Holy See, he had been sent into Norway to form the Church among that nearly converted nation. In these ungenial regions, amidst this wild people, he passed many years, and when he came back to Italy he left a church, flourishing with monasteries, and a holy clergy where he had found a wilderness inhabited by a half heathen population. Such was the reputation which he acquired for purity of life and prudence in managing ecclesiastical affairs, that on the death of Anastasius he was raised to preside over the Catholic Church. It was at a dangerous time, when the empire was arousing itself, and the church was on the eve of a contest, at which St. Gregory might have trembled. The times were changed since St. Gregory's death ; the world had grown accustomed to the great doctrines which he had vindicated, and they had now thoroughly worked into the feelings of Christendom. In another respect however matters were less favourable ; St. Gregory had formed his school about him, and his cardinals co-operated with him ; but since then affairs had become matters of precedent and custom at Rome, and the Pope often found himself obliged to act against his judgment, from the preponderance of one party or another in the Sacred College. There was at this time



an Imperial party amongst the Cardinals, and Hadrian found himself hampered by them.<sup>1</sup>

Hadrian did not at first come into direct collision with the Emperor. Frederic had yet to receive the imperial crown at his hands, and was on his good behaviour. When he appeared at Rome with his German army, the Pope and the Emperor had a mutual enemy to fear, the turbulent people of Rome, and much blood was shed on Frederic's coronation day. All however passed off happily as far as Hadrian was concerned ; the sole thing which tended to disturb their peace, was the hesitation of Frederic to hold the stirrup of the Pope, when he mounted his horse. Hadrian in his grave calm way said, " Since thou hast not paid me the honour which thy predecessors have paid me, I will not receive thee to the kiss of peace."<sup>2</sup> Frederic simply took the matter as one of custom and ceremonial. He went in a business-like way to work, looked into old records, and examined as witnesses those who had been present at the crowning of Lothaire, and finding that Hadrian was right, he complied. It was a piece of ceremony, like the kiss of the Pope's feet, very significant certainly, for it implied that the Head of the

<sup>1</sup> Repugnabant enim Cardinales illi qui addicti erant imperatori et non nisi quod ipsi placere scirent probandum putabant : in reliquis autem se adversarios objiciebant. Quod sæpe factum ab eis in maximum Romanæ ecclesiæ detrimentum. See the grave words of Baronius in ann. 1155, 23. If it had not been for the opposition of the German party to the terms offered by the king of Sicily, Hadrian would never have been in the awkward position at Beneventum, which forced him to make concessions to Roger.

<sup>2</sup> See Life of Hadrian in Muratori. Rer. Ital. Scrip., tom. iii. 443.

Church on earth, was above the Head of the Empire ; still it had nothing to do with individuals, and his Imperial majesty did not think himself degraded. But a serious cause of offence soon followed, which arising, as it did, from an apparent trifle, showed that two opposite principles were at work and might break out any day into open war. Hadrian sent to the emperor two legates, cardinals Roland, chancellor of the Holy See, and Bernard, to demand the liberation of a prelate who had been maltreated and detained prisoner by some German noble on his way from Rome. In the course of his letter the Holy Father had reminded Frederic how he had bestowed upon him the Imperial crown, and professed himself to be ready to grant him greater benefits.<sup>1</sup> Now it happened unfortunately that the Latin word for benefit, also signifies benefice or fief ; and hardly were the words out of the mouth of the official who read the letter to the emperor, when his Imperial majesty took fire, and all the princes of the empire rose up in anger. Was then the only emperor in the world, the head of the feudal hierarchy himself a vassal ? Was the Holy Roman empire itself a fief ? The notion was intolerable ; and when cardinal Roland innocently asked, “ Who then did bestow the crown on the emperor ? ” one of the fierce nobles around drew a sword, and would have struck him if Frederic had not interposed. The fact was, that the question was an awkward one. If Frederic’s lofty theory was true, if he was the imperial Head of the Christian world, where did he get the title ? To one like Frederic, dis-

<sup>1</sup> It seems absurd to suppose that Hadrian meant to claim the empire as a fief. What greater fiefs were there in the world to bestow ?

posed to make it any thing but an empty title, and above all who professed to reduce it to theory by his legists, and to draw inferences from it, the question was one which stared him in the face. Frederic could only ground his title on the fact that Charlemagne, some three hundred years before, had received the Imperial crown from Pope Leo one Christmas day in St. Peter's. The power of granting this crown resided in Rome, such was the theory of the times ; so much so that the mock senate of Rome claimed it, and Frederic had to choose between the sacred Head of Christendom and this self-constituted assembly. This theory was enough to justify the greatest pretensions to rule over temporal princes that the Pope ever made ; and since that power resided in one who was Christ's Vicar on earth, we need not wonder that the nations bowed before it. We may look upon it now calmly and dispassionately, for the power has passed away and is not even asserted ; and without taking fire like Frédéric and his princes, we may say that in as far as it could be carried out, it was true. The fact that it could be exercised was its justification, and it might be well if the nations had Christ's earthly representative to be to them a living impersonation of justice, and to step in when earthly and material power is of no avail.

The idea was therefore by no means so preposterous as might be imagined ; besides some kingdoms were acknowledged fiefs of the Holy See. However this may be, Hadrian did not in this case lay claim to this power ; he mildly answered Frederic that he was surprised that he should misinterpret his words, and that 'beneficium' meant benefit, as well as benefice ; so the storm cleared away for the present from the imperial brows. But nothing external would keep the peace

between two such elements as the Church and the world. The empire of the Church can hardly be defined ; in one sense it has no earthly rule at all, and in another it bears rule wherever there are men who have souls to be saved. Wide therefore is its dominion as is the empire of conscience, and thus in one sense the whole world comes under its jurisdiction. But this kingdom, strong as it is, depends entirely on a conscientious basis ; when therefore the conscience is vitiated or misinformed, it at once put itself in opposition to the Church. In this way then there can never long be peace between two such powers, unless one is recognized to be above the other. All this is true in the abstract ; but the battle between the Church and the world is hardly ever fought directly on these grounds ; but on a much grosser and more material battle field. And this was especially the case in the struggle between the Hohenstauffen and the Popes. In process of time the Church acquires rights and property, and these in a certain sense circumscribe, because they serve to define her power. Besides which they make her open to attack, by giving her points to defend, for which she cannot fight without the appearance of ambition. She must needs mingle in worldly policy, and appear externally like one of the powers of the world. Church property looks just like any other property, and if a Bishop possesses land, why should he not do homage for it ? If it is recognized and defended by the law, it becomes subject to the law. So reasoned Frederic. And while he was about it, he thought he might as well make laws about ecclesiastical property as any other. The Bishops in Italy were possessed of great power in the cities ; they were often temporal princes, and he could

not be sure of the fair cities of Lombardy without keeping them under. He therefore required the act of homage and oath of fealty from a Bishop as he would from one of his own nobles. When Hadrian remonstrated with him, he answered with a curious mixture of history and imperial theology, while the legist of Bologna evidently inspires the whole. Hadrian's letter begins with saying that the divine law bids us honour our parents. Frederic answered by quoting, "The law of justice, which gives every man his own. From his ancestors did he get his crown, but what had Silvester in the time of Constantine? Whatever that popedom of theirs possesses, it obtains from the liberality of princes." And then came the text about "rendering unto Cæsar all that is Cæsar's," and an exhortation to humility. At another time when Hadrian complained about the occupation of Episcopal palaces by himself and his retainers, he answered with a quotation from the digests that the soil was his, and therefore so was all that was built upon it.<sup>1</sup>

All this will at least serve to mark the character of the contest; it was the world's law in its process of formation, striving to draw into itself, and to neutralize the Church. If it had succeeded in merging the jurisdiction of the Church into its own, St. Gregory's work would have been undone. It was not however till after Hadrian's death that the Emperor's designs became apparent, for then broke out one of the most audacious acts of schism that ever attempted to divide the Christian world. In the conclave held for the election of the Pope, a large majority of the Cardinals united in favour of Roland, that same Chancellor

<sup>1</sup> Giesler, i. 52.

of the Holy See, who excited Frederic's anger by his untimely question. He had already been robed in the purple mantle in which the new Pontiff was presented to the people of Rome, when Cardinal Octavian, supported by two other Cardinals, pulled the mantle off him. A senator who was present snatched it out of Octavian's hand, who then proceeded to robe himself with another mantle, which he had brought with him for the purpose. Unluckily, however, he put on the hind part of the mantle foremost, so that the hood hung down in front ; then the doors were thrown open, and thus accoutred, he presented himself to the people, amidst a band of armed men, while the Cardinals, with the real successor of St. Peter, fled into the church to hide themselves. The instinct of Christendom saw through the transaction, and recognized Alexander, for so Roland was now called ; even Henry II.'s good sense led him right all through the struggle, and though he threatened great things in the height of his contest with St. Thomas, he remained faithful to Alexander. And now the designs of Frederic became apparent ;<sup>1</sup> he wished to have a German instead of a Catholic Pope. A Pope there must be, and let him be infallible too ; nay, the more infallible the better, provided he is but the servant of the empire. Sovereigns were ready enough to acknowledge the Papal supremacy to the utmost, when it suited their purpose, when they had a new kingdom to conquer, or a weak title to strengthen. It was only when he came in their way that they wished to be rid of him. So now Frederic called together a council at Pavia ; it consisted but of the

<sup>1</sup> De amissione imperialis curiæ timebat. Acta Alex. III. Muratori 3. 452.

bishops of the empire, and so he could safely talk of his rights as successor of Constantine, and quote the emperors who had exercised the right of convoking councils. The upshot was, as might have been expected, that Victor, for so Octavian had called himself, was judged to be Pope. But this council was a failure ; Alexander was too wise to submit his cause to any council whatever ; he was Pope and could not be judged ; besides which the Christian world had already decided by sending in its adherence to Alexander. Frederic saw that he was foiled, and next tried to entice the good Louis of France to a conference, to decide on the claims of the two claimants. Louis had been so far taken in as to promise to meet the Emperor ; but Frederic unhappily asserted in the course of the negotiation, that only the Bishops of the empire had the right of judging a cause respecting the election of a supreme Pontiff, his imperial majesty being the especial defender of the Holy See. But Louis smiled at this novel doctrine, and said, “ Does not the Emperor know that our Lord when on earth bade Peter feed His sheep ? And are not the French Bishops a part of the flock which the Son of God has committed to Peter ? ” And so saying, Louis “ turned his horse’s head disdainfully, and flew to arms with his barons and the rest of his forces ; ” and back went the Emperor, with all his men, and would not wait to confront the Fleurs-de-Lis. The times were not yet come when the world could take in the idea of a French Pope and a German Pope.

It is not our purpose to follow the struggle to its close, to show how the Lombard league was formed, how the Tuscan league, the army of the Church, joined it, and how after many a hard battle by land and by

sea, Frederic at last, in St. Mark's cathedral at Venice, threw himself prostrate at Alexander's feet, and the Pontiff raised him with tears in his eyes, and the Te Deum was entoned for joy. But the contest lasted for many a long year, during which Alexander had conflicting interests to settle, and a line of policy to pursue ; at the commencement of the whole contest he had to embark for France with all his train ; and little was the peace that he could enjoy with two contests on his hands, one with Henry of England, the other with the Emperor.

Little indeed was the supreme Pontiff to be envied in his high dignity ; and for this conclusion, like John of Salisbury, we have high authority. There remains on record a conversation which took place between two frank hearted Englishmen, one on the throne of St. Peter, the other brought close to it by his position. Considering that one of the interlocutors was Hadrian, the only Pope who was English born, the dialogue is unique, and forms a fitting moral to this chapter. "I call to witness," says John, "Lord Hadrian, that no man is more wretched than the Roman Pontiff, no condition more miserable than his. If he had nothing else to vex him, the labour alone would make him sink." He had gone through every office in the Church, from the very lowest, and every step brought an accession of bitterness ; and yet all former bitterness was joy compared to what he felt on the thorny chair of St. Peter. Well might the crown and the mitre shine with brilliancy, for they were of fire, and burnt the brow of the wearer. And in another place, John tells us how Pope Hadrian begged of him to tell him what men thought of the Roman curia, and how he bluntly laid bare what was one cause of Hadrian's difficulties, the universal



outery against the exactions and avarice of the court of Rome. Doubtless Hadrian was in part right when, with a smile, he answered his rough monitor by quoting the old fable of the body and its revolted members. The administration of the ecclesiastical offices of Christendom could not be carried on without extensive resources. The whole array of expectatives, mandates, and oblations, might be excused on the ground that it was necessary that the Pope should have a certain number of benefices to give away, just as a prime minister cannot carry on the government without the exercise of patronage. All this is true, and the governed are ever apt to overrate the faults of their rulers ; but it is also true that the voice of St. Bernard had hardly disappeared from the earth, and he had cried out “ O ambition, the cross of the ambitious, how is it that thou art a torment to all, yet all love Thee ! Ambition rather than devotion wears the pavement of St. Peter’s ! Does not the papal palace echo to its voice every day ? Is not the whole laborious discipline of law and canon administered for its gain ? Does not Italian avarice gloat over its spoils with insatiable avidity ?”<sup>1</sup> This of course proves nothing as to the rights of the Holy See, nor did it interfere in St. Bernard’s mind with the ideal of the father of Christendom, “ the hammer to beat down tyrants, the father of kings, the moderator of laws, the dispenser of canons.”<sup>2</sup> Nor does it prove anything against individuals ; the character of Hadrian himself has never been impeached, and even John of Salisbury, with his hand on his heart, declares, “ Never have I seen more honest clerks than in the Romish church.” But it does prove that all the inconveniences of an ex-

<sup>1</sup> De Con. iii. 1.<sup>2</sup> De Con. 4 fin.

tensive system belonged to the Roman See. The Pope must be a man of business ; he must be vexed with the complaints of his subjects, and the evil of his ministers ; and the Cardinals and great men of the church must be men of action and politicians. And now that we have drawn the moral that we wanted from this narrative, we will go back to where we left Aelred in 1138, and see what he was doing while all this was going on in the great world.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Cistercian Abbot.*

SILENTLY and rapidly did the Cistercian order spread in England ; first came Waverley, and so retired and solitary was its situation, that its existence was unknown to their brethren in the north, and they were astonished to discover that there were white monks in England besides themselves.<sup>1</sup> Rievaulx, Tintern, and Fountains came next, and from them issued communities which spread over the face of the land ; and this silent rise of the houses of St. Mary in England, is the only redeeming feature of Stephen's miserable reign. "At that time," says William of Newbridge, "when the whole strength of the regal power was gone, the power-

<sup>1</sup> Battle of the Standard, ap. Twysden. Waverley was founded in 1128, according to its annals. It never rose to the importance of Rievaulx ; in 1187 it had but a hundred and twenty lay-brethren and seventy monks, while Rievaulx, within ten years after its foundation, had three hundred brethren, though the proportion of the lay-brethren to the monks does not appear.

ful men of the realm, each, according to his means, continued to build castles, either to defend their own or to overrun their neighbours' estates. At this time then when evil was rife through the weakness of king Stephen, or rather through the devil's malice, the great King of Heaven by His wisdom and Providence, gloriously stepped forth in a marked way to put down the king of pride, by erecting such castles as befit the King of peace. For, many more monasteries of servants and hand-maids of the Lord are acknowledged to have risen up during the short time of Stephen's reign, or nominal reign, than during the hundred years before."<sup>1</sup> It seemed to be the only sign of religion left among the nobles, and it was a source of great comfort to men of restless habits continually exposed to great dangers, when they thought that their monks were praying for them while they were engaged in their perilous wanderings.<sup>2</sup> William, of Albemarle, declared that he always slept soundly about cock crow, whether under his tent or on the wide sea, because he knew that then the bells of his Abbey of Melsa were ringing for matins;<sup>3</sup> and at another time, John Courtenay, when in great peril of shipwreck, bade the sailors be of good cheer, for his Cistercians of Ford were at that moment praying for him. The poor people too loved "the hooded folk, who spent a part of their time in prayer and the service of God, and the rest in the labours of the field like rustics."

In the year 1143, William, Earl of Lincoln, came to the Abbot of Rievaulx, to beg of him to send a colony of monks to Revesby, one of his estates in Lincolnshire.

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, 1, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, 5, 393.      <sup>3</sup> Dugdale, 379.

The Abbot complied, and sent Aelred, with twelve monks, to take possession of the new ground assigned to them ; and so he left the valley of Rievaulx, about five years after the time when we left him at Durham, standing by his father's death-bed.<sup>1</sup> It was a place of no great dignity this Abbacy of Revesby, but it was one which required consummate prudence. Each new community was an experiment, and when the founder had given a certain quantity of wood and meadow, the monks had to shift for themselves, and to clear their way by felling trees and building habitations, as a settler would do in the woods of America. There was plenty of marsh in this domain, for special permission is given to the monks to build where they please in the marsh ; and from these words of the charter, it is not very hard to guess that Aelred's occupations at this time were principally cutting down wood and draining a Lincolnshire fen.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the picture which we thus get of him, axe in hand, working in his tunic and black scapular is not very dignified ; and he must often have regretted Rievaulx and his novices ; but monks do not choose for themselves, and all was gain to him for Christ's sake. One good however he got from his Abbacy of Revesby ; he had there advanced into the country of the Gilbertines, for fens seem to be the territory of the order of Sempringham, as mountains of Benedictines, and valleys of Cistercians. And here probably he became acquainted with St. Gilbert, for

<sup>1</sup> Dugdale says that the annals of Lowth give 1143 for the foundation of this Abbey ; and the annals of Peterborough though they assign it to 1142, yet say that it was in the pontificate of Celestine II., which was in 1143.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, v. 454.

“Gislebertus de Semplingham” is mentioned as one of the witnesses to a charter belonging to the Abbey. He was not however more than two years at Revesby, when he was called away to a much higher sphere.<sup>1</sup> In 1145, William, the first Abbot of Rievaulx, died, and brother Maurice was elected in his stead. It was not long, however, before the new Abbot judged himself unfit for his dignity, and resigned his charge. Richard of Hexham says, that he did so for the glory of God. He doubtless found that he made a better monk than Abbot, and retired. It was a harder thing to be an Abbot in those days than may be imagined. On his resignation, the monks bethought themselves of their former master of the novices, the Abbot of Revesby, and so they elected him Abbot of Rievaulx.

Now since there were various sorts of Abbots in the middle ages, we must classify them before we can know where, or under what species, to place Aelred. There is of course the grand division of good and bad, but this is far too wide for our purpose. There was the hunting and hawking Abbot, a character rife in Saxon times, but as yet rare in England since the Conquest. And then there was the political Abbot, he whose shaven crown and thoughtful face might be seen at parliaments and hustings,<sup>2</sup> a man in high favour with kings and nobles. He often had a private exchequer, appropriated the convent money, and sent presents out of

<sup>1</sup> The chronicle of Melrose puts Abbot William's death in 1145. Simeon, of Durham, appears to give 1146 as the date; his words may, however, mean that William died in 1145, and that Aelred succeeded in the course of the next year, the short interval being occupied by Maurice.

<sup>2</sup> John of Salisbury.

it to the king and queen.<sup>1</sup> “Now a days,” says Aelred, “what market, what court of justice, what council can go on without monks?” These Abbots however were not always bad, and of the good sort was Suger, the great Abbot of St. Denis. Besides this, there was the negligent Abbot, the good easy man, who sat in his abbatial lodgings, entertaining seculars instead of associating with his own monks, and asking them to dinner at his table as he ought to have done; he cared not though the master cellarer and officials of the convent pawned the convent money to Jews;<sup>2</sup> and he let monastic discipline go to ruin by allowing the monks in the infirmary to talk as they would, so that the brethren pretended to be sick when they were not, and by giving dispensations to the brethren, and allowing them too many pittances on feast-days. And there was the tyrannical Abbot,<sup>3</sup> who despatched the brethren who were obnoxious to him to distant cells, and kept them there all their lives, who, instead of consulting “the nobility of the convent,”<sup>4</sup> its men of rank, the prior, the cellarer, and the sacrist, chose to surround himself with young men and novices, and act without advice. And then he would appropriate the property of the convent, and give the lands to enrich his family.<sup>5</sup> But on the whole Abbots who were imperfect without being absolutely bad may be divided into two classes. First, there was the Abbot who gave so much time to contemplation and prayer as to neglect his duties, and to make blunders from not knowing the resources of the Abbey; as did John, Abbot of St. Alban’s, who pulled down a large

<sup>1</sup> Matt. Par. Vitæ. Abb. St. Albani, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. Par. 114. Cronica Jocelini, p. 2    <sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Matt Parr, 102.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. Par. 102, 113.

portion of the church, and found that he had no money to build it up again.<sup>1</sup> It was indeed very necessary that the Abbot should look after the property of the convent, for instances occurred in which a convent was entirely deserted by its monks, simply because their property was not enough for their maintenance, as happened to the Abbey of Pipewell, in Northamptonshire. It once stood in the midst of beautiful woods, which formed a principal source of its revenue.<sup>2</sup> But by the negligence of some Abbots, and the misconduct of others, the woods were fast thinned and destroyed; whole trees were burnt in the huge chimneys in winter time, powerful persons who wanted timber for building helped themselves from the trees, and bad Abbots cut down the stately oaks to pay their debts, till the poor Abbey was left shorn of her leafy honours, "like a bird stripped of its feathers." Besides, if the Abbot did not keep a sharp look out on his grounds, his neighbours were sure to encroach upon him. So it did not do for the Abbot to be absorbed in contemplation, and to neglect his business. Secondly, besides this class, there is another much more extensive, and this consists of the Abbots, who were so attentive to the secular affairs of the convent as, externally at least, to appear like worldly men. These were the sharp, shrewd, keen-eyed men, who esteemed the honour and comfort of the convent as their own, ready to fight with king or bishop for the privileges of the house. Such an one would journey to Rome to procure exemption from episcopal authority, with his pockets well lined with marks of gold and silver for the cardinals.<sup>3</sup> An Abbot must be

<sup>1</sup> Matt. Par. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, vol. 5, 4, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. 71.

eloquent and ready, so as to preach dignified sermons to the people in the church ; he must not be too learned or too spiritual, and the men that he loves are not the good, humble monks, but men like himself, who make good officials for the convent. Yet he must be irreproachable in his morals, that none speak evil of the convent. A stately figure he must be, to set off the jewelled mitre, and the curiously wrought dalmatic, and the pastoral staff. In fine, he must be such an one as to please the monks of St. Edmund, whose prayer was, when they wanted a new Abbot, "From good clerks deliver us, good Lord."<sup>1</sup> He would form the very beau ideal of him whose general rule, on an election, was "that we choose not a very good monk, nor yet an over-wise clerk, neither one too simple nor too weak, for I know that some one has said, 'Medio tutissimus ibis.'"

Aelred belonged to neither of these classes ; he was rather the Father Abbot, than the Lord Abbot. The Cistercian idea of a superior was, that he should be the spiritual director of the whole convent. What Aelred had been to the novices, he now was to the three hundred brethren of Rievaulx, with the additional accession of a dignity marked rather by its influence, than by the external signs of magnificence common in other orders. His office was a laborious one, and he who was made Abbot was considered, in comparison with the simple monk, to be taking the part of Martha rather than that of Mary. Many a time when he would rather have been on his knees in the Church, had Aelred to listen to the detail of the spiritual wants of the brethren. Little do they know of monastic life who suppose that all temptation was over as soon as

<sup>1</sup> Cronica Jocelini, p. 11.



the gates of the monastery had closed upon the monk, and shut him out from the world. "Ah ! brethren," said Aelred, in one of his sermons to the convent, one Christmas season, "of those who are just come from the world, some are unlearned and simple-minded, others erudite and subtle, some bound by the habits of vice, others, though sinners, yet free from all crime, some brought up in luxury, others worn down by a hardy life, some slothful, others active, some of such a temper as to feel scarce any temptations to impurity, others tempted by the least thing, some of a fiery temper, others naturally mild. It is necessary then to study the state and the temper of every one who flies hither from the world, to know what is hurtful to each, and to point out to him the best refuge from his enemy. Some are to be kept away from all external employment, others from the society of this or that man, others are to find a covert under a strict silence from the burning heat of anger, others must be taught to cure their lusts by coarse food, others are to be preserved from a restless spirit and a wandering heart by labour and watchings, others are to be sheltered from the attacks of evil spirits, by psalms and prayers, by meditation and reading. In every case an Abbot must offer to each vice, by which those under him are attacked, the proper treatment which experience tells us, is opposed to it."<sup>1</sup> This was Aelred's occupation.

They were great schools of spiritual life these first Cistercian convents, wonderful realizations of the Book of the Imitation of Christ. Aelred knew all the stages of the religious life of the soul, and could classify and arrange them as a physician would states

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 28.

of the body. "The first step," he says, "is, that a man flying from the world and eschewing all vice, should shun all worldliness.<sup>1</sup> Then in all obedience let him submit himself to his superior, and let him purify himself, and in hunger and thirst, in watchings and labours, in poverty and nakedness, take vengeance on himself for all that his memory taxes him with, and so must good habits be set up in the place of bad. Thus in the nest of discipline must he remain, till he be full fledged, and have the wings of virtue wherewith to fly, for never can he rule, who has not first learned to obey. And then purified from vice and adorned with virtue, let him pass on to the study of the scriptures, and there he will receive illumination and gain wisdom. And when he shall have learned in the scriptures to refer all his life and knowledge to the love of God and of his neighbour, then on the two wings of wisdom and of love, borne up to the mount of contemplation, let him learn to form this earthly tabernacle after the pattern of the heavenly. The first step then is conversion, the second purification, the third virtue, the fourth knowledge, the fifth contemplation, the sixth charity. And these perchance are the six steps to the throne of Solomon ; if any one strives to sit thereon, without having trodden them, he will mount, not to take his seat there, but to fall headlong." In another place, by a more accurate division, he mentions three stages,—Conversion, Purification, and Contemplation ; and in this last stage, "the soul purified by spiritual exercises, passes on to heavenly contemplation and meditation on the Holy Scriptures. Then does virtue begin to grow sweet to it, vice to be loathsome, and it tastes how sweet the

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 28.

Lord is.<sup>1</sup> In the first of these stages, fear, proceeding from the thought of God's justice, purifies the soul; and when it is purified, wisdom illuminates it; and after this illumination the goodness of God rewards it by the infusion of His sweetness."<sup>2</sup>

Strange is this early germ of the threefold division of the progress of the Christian soul into the Purificative, the Illuminative and the Unitive life, which was drawn much more fully many hundred years after by another Saint. Aelred here shows us the spiritual exercises of the twelfth century. And it was this system of which he was the administrator at Rievaulx. Like a good shepherd, with his pastoral staff in his hand, he ruled his flock, bearing the weak ones in his bosom, and helping all with his gentle voice to escape the jaws of the lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. How much he loved them appears in every word of his writings. Many slight vestiges there are of his conventual history, scattered up and down in his works, scanty glimpses of struggles and pains which he participated with his spiritual children. How they rejoiced when they could chat with him alone, away from the Philistines who took up his time, as they called the strangers who came to him on secular matters! How familiarly they talked to him, not fearing to use words of playful raillery with each other in his presence, for it was his maxim that the soul required relaxation at times. They ventured to speak to him of his friends, how one had taken offence at him for some trivial cause, how in times when he was falsely accused, one friend who lived beyond the seas, had remained faithful to him, while even another

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 31.

<sup>2</sup> De Jesu puero. 493.

friend, the Sacristan of Clairvaux, had taken part against him.<sup>1</sup> Each of these slight hints contains a whole history of feelings and affections which has now perished ; but one thing we can see, that he was still the same Aelred, always looking out for some one to love, and one young monk was especially beloved by him, called Ivo, and for him probably he wrote that most beautiful treatise of his on Jesus,<sup>2</sup> when a child of twelve years old in the temple. But the Lord would not let him love Ivo too well, for this young monk died before he had been long at Rievaulx. But even more than for the bodily death of his disciples did he mourn for their spiritual death ; one especially, there was a promising brother, who fell we know not how ; nor should we know any thing about him, if Aelred did not hold up the fall of this nameless brother as a warning to the convent in one of his sermons. And his love descended to more minute particulars, for he condolees with his brethren for the loss which they one year sustained by the destruction of a flock of sheep,—a serious loss for the farmer monks, who lived by the sale of the wool.

It must not however be supposed that Aelred's life was altogether as quiet as it might at first sight appear. He was sometimes obliged to be my lord Abbot as well as his neighbours. The late Abbot of Rievaulx had been obliged to make a journey across the Alps, and to appear at Rome in favour of St. William's deposition. Aelred's journeys did not, however, lead him so far from home. On the death of Henry Murdach, St. William was installed at York, without any opposition from the new Abbot. Aelred had however many voyages across

<sup>1</sup> De Spirit-amri. iii. 453, 460. et passim.

<sup>2</sup> De Jesu puero duodenni.

the sea to the general Chapter of Citeaux. But even without going to Burgundy, he had matter enough to employ him at home. The Abbot of Rievaulx was head of the Cistercian Abbots in England, and sometimes causes came before him judicially. In 1151, he decided a cause in favour of the monks of Byland, who after many troubles had at length obtained a settlement. The poor brethren had been expelled from their convent by the Scots, and had been refused shelter by the Abbey of Furness, their mother house, and had managed to find a home on the other side of the Rye, so near Rievaulx that the bells of each convent might be heard from the other. This was, however, contrary to Cistercian discipline, and they again removed to Byland. There they were in a flourishing state, and had not only built themselves a church, but also a parochial chapel in an out lying valley, for the use of which they had generously sent one of the bells of the convent in a waggon.<sup>1</sup> When lo ! the Abbot of Furness, after treating them so inhospitably, claimed jurisdiction over them, and the cause came before Aelred, who decided it in favour of his poor neighbours of Byland. But not only by his own order, but by all the monasteries around him, he was consulted in cases of difficulty. In some of the later years of his life, it cannot precisely be ascertained which, he was called to Watton, to pronounce on the well-known case of an inmate of the convent, who had fallen into sin.<sup>2</sup> The only question which was asked him was, What was to be done with the wretched penitent, under the extraordinary circumstances ? Aelred, as appears by his writings,<sup>3</sup> was no

<sup>1</sup> Dugdale, 5, 351.

<sup>2</sup> V. Life of St. Gilbert, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 24. And also Serm. 4, p. 37.

friend to monks who were ever on the look-out for miracles, but in this case there was no choice between accusing the nuns of a wicked fraud, or believing the truth of miracle. Aelred found that he had reason to believe that the nuns were holy women, and thought the latter alternative by far the less difficult. He had pity on the wretched sinner, and when the prior wrote to him to ask whether she should be punished any more, he answered, "What God has cleansed call not thou common, and what He has Himself absolved do not thou bind."

In the Lent of 1153, he went on a journey which was ever memorable to him. The business of his order took him into Scotland, and he saw king David for the last time in his life. David had founded no less than four Cistercian Abbeys in Scotland, it is therefore not at all unlikely that Aelred should have often seen him since he became Abbot ; and it must have been with a fearful joy that he revisited those scenes from which so many years before he had fled as if for his life. Many a change had taken place, both in king David and in himself, since he had left Scotland. And on this, his last visit, he missed a face which had ever welcomed him with beaming eyes. Henry, the heir of the crown of Scotland, the brave soldier, and accomplished prince, had died the year before, to the irreparable loss of Scotland. With his devoted piety and enlightened understanding, he would have been a fitting match for the Henry who was just about to mount the English throne. Aelred had left David in the beginning of his reign, full of schemes for the improvement of a realm, which was flourishing under his care ; now he found him a penitent and a mourner, bound down by grief, yet resigned to God's will. He acknowledged that the death of his

son was a fitting punishment, sent by God for having let loose the savage Galwegians on the north of England. So poignant had been his grief, that had it not been for the entreaties of his whole realm, bishops and nobles, he would have given up his crown and sceptre, and retired to a convent. When Aelred left him, he seemed to have a presentiment that they should never meet again on this side the grave, and he embraced him fondly and shed tears when they parted. A few months after, at the end of May, shortly before the Ascension, news were brought to Rievaulx that David had died as he had lived, a holy death. Aelred mourned for his friend and benefactor with the poignant grief which was natural to him. In the first burst of his sorrow he wrote a sketch of the good king's character, and afterwards sent it to one for whom he then felt a great anxiety and love, to Henry, who had mounted the throne of England, David's grand nephew.

It is interesting to see the light in which the Abbot views the young king ; and truly Henry might well be an object of solicitude to every thoughtful man. He was the most powerful prince in Europe, in the flower of his age, and gifted with talents and the will to extend his power. Henry began well ; near the place of his landing was a church, into which he entered to pray, and at mass he came forward to receive the kiss of peace from the priest. His policy soon showed that he meant to restrain the power of the nobles, to show justice to all, and especially to favour the peasants and the burghers of the towns. In the very month of his coronation, the election of Adrian to the papal throne seemed to promise a happy concord between the English Church and state. Aelred then might well look with fondness and hope on the young king. Henry's

vices had not yet developed, and Aelred, with the sanguine and trusting temper which made him unable to conceive the possibility of fraud in the convent of Watton, invested the young king with all manner of virtues. He looked upon him as the destined restorer of the old English line to the throne of England, the line of Edward the Confessor, which the Abbot had never ceased to love. He applies to Henry an old prophecy, ascribed to St. Dunstan, and rejoices "that England has now a king of English blood, and bishops and abbots, princes, and good soldiers." He fondly draws out "from ancient chronology," the genealogy of Henry, through his English mother and English kings, "even up to Adam, the father of all mortals ;" and he holds up, as a model to him, his great ancestor Alfred, and David, whose death he was mourning, "whose pure hands had made him a belted knight." At the same time, with a keen anticipation of Henry's dangers, he drops various hints about submission to the Church ; "how the blessed Alfred thought that the great dignity of kings consisted in having no power in the Church of Christ, and how he imitated the example of Constantine, who said to the bishops, 'It belongs not to me to judge of priests.'" Henry's latter days, troubled as they were with the rebellion of his sons, and stained with the blood of a martyr, would not have been so different from his religious landing, when, high in hopes, he threw himself on his knees in the little church by the seashore, if he had attended to Aelred's warning.

A part of the Abbot's exhortation to Henry was, that he should watch over the interests of the royal family of Scotland ; and this portion of the homily he neglected, as well as the rest. Henry, when he was made a knight by David, had sworn to leave the Scottish king and his



heirs in peaceful possession of the domains which they held of the English crown. He, however, outwitted David's successor, the young king Malcolm, who was no match for his unscrupulous suzerain. The young prince was the son of Henry, the friend of Aelred's youth. From the simplicity and purity of his character he was called the maiden king ; and of him St. Godric said, that Malcolm and St. Thomas were more acceptable to God than any men between the north and the Alps.<sup>1</sup> For both these reasons Aelred loved him, and was enabled to do him a service which Henry's armies could never have effected. When Malcolm returned from France, whither, with a boyish ardour for war, he had accompanied his cousin Henry, he found his nobles every where in revolt, war in the wild clans of the Highlands, and war in Galloway. His people did not like his intimacy with the English monarch, and Malcolm was almost looked upon as a foreigner. He, however, quelled the rising of the Highlands, and expelled the savage inhabitants of Moray, and substituted for them some of his more peaceable Lowland subjects ; he reduced his revolted nobles, and Galloway alone remained. In three pitched battles he beat these tur-

<sup>1</sup> From the connexion which undoubtedly existed between Whiterne, the See of Galloway and St. Aelred, it seems exceedingly likely that he persuaded Fergus to retire, though the writer of the life in Capgrave mixes up two events together. It is certain from Fordun, 8. 4., that Fergus did take the habit of a canon at Holyrood, but the dissensions which took place in his family to which he refers, did not happen till after Aelred's death, in the reign of William. Fordun, 8, 25, 39. The revolt of Fergus occurred soon after Henry's expedition to Toulouse, probably in the year 1160, which is the date given in the Chronicle of Holyrood. Ang. Sac. i. 161.

bulent Galwegian clans in one year, and the country was reduced to a precarious state of peace. But the cause of the evil still remained, and unless he could have expelled the people, as he had done those of Moray, it seemed likely to remain. The people were the remnants of the ancient Picts, and resisted all the efforts of the Scottish king to civilize them. Vice seemed so thoroughly engrained into their character that even Christianity had not expelled it. An Abbot of Rievaulx, however, might venture amidst the savage tribes of Galloway ; Aelred's name was well known all over the border, and even the vicious chieftains of the country felt awed by his simple dignity. It is not known what special cause took Aelred into Galloway. The old bishopric of Whiterne had just been re-established, and the regular canons, who had been introduced, had a great love and reverence for him. He had certainly visited them, and had written the Life of St. Ninian, the founder of the See. It seems that he even knew the dialect of this wild region, for the original life of the Saint was in their language. At all events, all Scotland had heard of the holy Abbot of Rievaulx, who had once been high steward to king David ; and Fergus, the chieftain of Galloway, knew very well who he was when he saw the white habit approach this mountain fastness. Aelred negotiated a permanent peace with the dangerous chief. This was a strange diplomacy, but a most successful one. Fergus surrendered himself into the hands of Malcolm, but instead of being put to death for his revolt, he was allowed to take the habit of a canon in the monastery of the Holyrood, at Edinburgh.

This is almost the last of the scanty notices of Aelred's life which have been left on record. In the

same year in which he rendered this signal service to Scotland, occurred the council of Pavia, and in his sermons to the brethren in the Advent of that year, he mourns bitterly over the miserable schism which was dividing the Church, and declares his unshaken adherence to Alexander. The whole Cistercian order was interested in the contest, for their brethren in Germany were suffering persecution at the hands of Frederic for their fidelity to the rightful successor of St. Peter. There is a deep and almost prophetic melancholy about the words of Aelred to his monks, when he applies the words of the prophet Isaiah to his own times, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." "Ah ! brethren," he says, "the Lord hath created two great lights in the firmament of the holy Church, the priesthood and the kingdom. The greater light is the priesthood to rule the day, that is, spiritual things ; the lesser light is the kingdom, to rule the night of worldly things. It is an unnatural thing if the sun rule the night, if the priest should draw over the clear light of his conscience, the night of worldly matters ; or if the moon should rule the day, the king should meddle with the administration of the sacraments." And thus in words rather of sorrow than of anger, he bids the bishops of the time remember St. Dunstan and St. Cuthbert. The contest between Henry and the Church had not yet begun ; St. Thomas was not yet Archbishop ; but in Aelred's mournful words, in which he asks the courtier prelates of the time, how they could be martyrs who were ambitious and ashamed of poverty, it might seem as if he foresaw how in time of persecution they would fall away, as indeed they did. And again, in the same sorrowful

manner he speaks of the kingly power, "Then shall the moon be turned into blood when the hands of the prince are full of blood, when they take away the right of the just man, and follow not equity, but their own lusts and anger." Both Henry and the prelate, to whom these sermons are dedicated, Gilbert Foliot, the memorable Bishop of London, might have taken warning by these words.

Aelred, too, in the same discourses, takes a long farewell of his brethren, as he was setting out to the general chapter of the year at Citeaux. He seems to feel that his life was precarious, and he bids his children pray for him, for it is my wish, he says, to lay down among you the tabernacle of my flesh, and pour out my spirit in your hands, that you may close the eyes of your father, and my bones may be laid in the grave under your eyes." He wished that his tomb, with his crosier sculptured on it, should catch the eyes of his brethren, that they might say a prayer for Abbot Aelred, as they passed it in chapter. Aelred might well fear when he was going on so long a journey, lest he should never see Rievaulx again ; for many years before his death, one account says ten, he was afflicted with a terrible chronic disease, apparently the stone. He did, however, return from Citeaux, and lived for six years after this journey ; but they were years of pain and of living death. Very little is known of this period of his life except that he suffered, and that he died. He does not appear to have given up his functions, at least in the commencement of his disease, for the journeys both to Galloway and to Burgundy come within the period of his sufferings ; and to the last he seems to have been able to celebrate mass, but at times his pains were most

acute. One account represents him as sitting on a mat before the fire, with his head between his knees, bowed down with pain ; and during the year before his death, after celebrating mass, he used to remain for a whole hour on his bed, unable to speak or move. Still his spirit rose above his wasted and emaciated body ; he spent his time in constant prayer and meditation on the Holy Scriptures. He had said before, in sermons preached in the beginning of his disorder, " Brethren, I tell you, no misfortune can I suffer, nothing sad or bitter arise, which by the opening of the Holy Scriptures cannot be made to vanish, or be borne with greater ease. How often, sweet Jesus, does my day turn into evening ; how often does intolerable pain, like the darkness of night, succeed to the feeble light of consolation. All things become tasteless ; all that I see is a burthen to me. But I go to meditate in Thy fields, I turn over the sacred page, then does Thy grace, sweet Jesus, drive away the darkness with its light, do away with weariness, and then do tears succeed to groans, and heavenly joy follows tears." St. Augustine's Confessions was also always in his hands ; tears were ever flowing from his eyes, and his thoughts were ever fixed on his Lord, for whom he had given up all things earthly. It was no wonder, that while he thus only held to earth by a body which was a perpetual crucifixion to him, the brethren, as they passed the cell of their father, heard his voice speaking, and other voices answering, which by their sweetness they took to be those of angels. At length, about the feast of the blessed St. Laurence, whose martyrdom he had so long imitated by his patient endurance of excruciating pain, his loving and gentle spirit was released from its sufferings, to the presence

of Him whom he had seen on earth, reflected, however darkly, in the glass of love.<sup>1</sup>

When the news of Aelred's death came to the Abbey of Swineshead, in Lincolnshire, Gilbert, the Abbot, was preaching on that verse of the Song of Solomon, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse ; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey ; I have drank my wine with my milk." Gilbert was Aelred's friend, and knew him well, and broke forth into these words, "Large and copious is that honeycomb, which in these days has passed to the banquet of the Lord, I mean the lord Abbot of Rievaulx, news of whose death has been brought to us, while we are commenting on this passage. Methinks that in him, now that he has been taken away, this garden of ours has been laid bare, and a large bundle of its myrrh has been gathered by the Lord, its husbandman. No such honeycomb is now left in our hive. Who more pure in his life, more wise in his doctrine ? Who more suffering in body, more unwearied in spirit ! His mouth, like the honeycomb, poured forth the words of honied wisdom. His flesh

<sup>1</sup> 1166 is the common date given for St. Aelred's death ; but the Chronicle of Melrose gives 1167 ; and in the account of Byland Abbey, given in Dugdale, it appears that the year 1197 was the thirtieth year after his death. He is commonly said to have died on the 12th of January, but the reason of this is probably because his festival was appointed for that day ; no contemporary authority fixes it to that time, while Gilbert, of Hoyalnd, in a sermon delivered in the octave of the feast of St. Laurence, says that St. Aelred had died "in these days," and that the news had just reached him. It should be added that in a martyrology put out by Benedict XIV., St. Aelred's feast is appointed to be kept in March.

was sick with a lingering disease, but his soul within him dwelt with a lingering love on heavenly things. While his flesh, on fire with pain, was burning like myrrh, his soul was on fire with a flame, fed with the precious gum of charity ; and both together rose up in a perpetual incense of unwearied love. His body was shrivelled and wasted, but his soul was filled with marrow and fatness ; therefore will he ever praise the Lord with joyful lips. His mouth was like an honeycomb, dropping honey, for with his whole soul on his lips he used to pour forth the calm feelings of his heart, with his countenance serene, and his measured gestures indicating inward peace. His intellect was clear, and his speech thoughtful. He was modest in his questions, and more modest in his answers. Patiently did he bear with those who were troublesome, although himself a trouble to none ; and while he was acute in seeing what was wrong, he was long before he noticed it, and patient in bearing it. Often have I seen him, when any of those who sat near him broke rudely on his words, suspend what he had to say, till the other had wasted his breath ; and then when the rude torrent of wearisome speech was passed, he would take up again his words where he had left them off, with the same calmness as he had waited. He was swift to hear and slow to speak. Not that he could be said to be slow to wrath, for he had no wrath at all. A sweet honeycomb was he of whom I speak, overflowing with the honey which was within. His mind was full of cells, and he dropped his sweetness everywhere, from the comb where he had stored up matter for what he said ; and many men are living still who have tasted of his sweetness. In his doctrine he looked not for that wearisome subtlety which has more to do with

disputation than instruction. Moral science was what he studied and put out in elegant words ; he was well versed also in the language of the spiritual life, which he was wont to explain among those who were perfect. His doctrine was milk for the consolation of the simple, with which, however, he often mixed the wine of words, which rejoiced the heart. So did his teaching, though simple as milk, carry away the hearts of his hearers as though they were drunk with the wine of spiritual gladness. We must mourn that such a man has been taken from us, but still we may rejoice that we have sent forth such a bundle of myrrh from our poor gardens, to the garden of heaven. There he is now an ornament, who was a help to us upon earth."

This is a portrait of St. Aelred, for so we may now call him, drawn by one who knew him, while the recollection was fresh upon him. It may help us to get a clear idea even of his features, pallid and drawn as they were by sickness ; and at all events it gives a vivid picture of his mind, pouring itself out in little offices of love, notwithstanding his pains of body. Every history and every tradition presents the same idea, and marks him as the holy and loving Abbot, well skilled in healing hearts broken by grief, or wounded by sin. Others come down to us as holy Bishops, Martyrs, or Confessors, but St. Aelred was pre-eminently the Abbot of England.



## CHAPTER IX.

*Cistercian Teaching.*

THOUGH we have now gone through the life of St. Aelred, as far as time has spared it, and we may look upon the blessed Saint as having gone to his rest, yet in one sense he still lives to us, not only by his intercessions but in his writings, which have remained to us. He is the great Cistercian writer of England, and in this point of view we have still to look upon not only himself, but the whole intellectual movement of which he was a portion. At first sight, it would seem as if Cistercians had little or nothing to do with literature or philosophy. It was by giving up worldly studies that both St. Bernard and St. Aelred became Cistercians ; and philosophy was a portion of the sacrifice which they made to God on assuming the white habit.<sup>1</sup> St. Bernard left the schools of Chatillon to go to Cîteaux ; he had there been the best poet in the school,<sup>2</sup> and the many quotations from the classics found in his writings, show what he really had given up in sacrificing his taste and intellect to religion ; and the same was the case with St. Aelred. The only case in which a Cistercian was allowed to pursue regular studies, after becoming a monk, was, that of Otto<sup>3</sup> of Frisingen, and he, when he became a princely Bishop,

<sup>1</sup> Vit. St. Bern. lib. i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Berengar. Apol. St. Bernard often quotes Persius.

<sup>3</sup> Otto never misses an opportunity of bringing in metaphysics in his History of Frederic Barbarossa. He evidently

retained much more of the scion of the house of Hohenstauffen, than of the pupil of St. Stephen. It is remarkable too, that the scholars at Paris at first listened unmoved to St. Bernard's eloquence, and to the rough syllogisms which he propounded to them on their violation of God's holy law ; Mount St. Genevieve and Citeaux seem from the first to have been in secret opposition.<sup>1</sup> Still the Cistercian reform seemed likely to go on its own way, without clashing directly with the schools, had not St. Bernard been forced out of his cloister of Clairvaux, to oppose the rationalism which was dominant within them, in the person of Abelard. Europe might have anticipated its history by four centuries had it not been for St. Bernard. Abelard's was not a clear and distinct heresy, which could be put in a tangible shape like the Arian or Nestorian. It was a wide-spreading rationalism, sound only by accident on any point, and claiming exemption from all condemnation, on the ground that it was only one way of putting Christianity. It was no heresy, was its plea, but a bright and dazzling display of intellectual activity. The human mind had just awakened from a long sleep, and had become more philosophical. It had learned not only its Horace and its Virgil, but its Aristotle too, and it must not be stinted in the use of its newly-found treasures.

Now it was true, to a certain extent, that the twelfth century was the beginning of a new intellectual era ;

thought that Gilbert de la Porée had been harshly treated. It should be said for him that he died at Morimond, and on his death-bed protested his submission to the Church in all that he had said about Gilbert.

<sup>1</sup> Exord. Mag. b. vii. 13. and Vincent of Beauvais quoted in Manriquez in ann. 1122.

things immediately before it had been dark, not that God had ever suffered His truth to be darkened in His church, but that it was many centuries before the barbarians, who had seized on the Western empire, had leisure to spare for learning, sacred or profane. The Church had enough to do to teach them the faith. She had to fight hard to prevent herself being merged in the body politic, into which, with desperate throes, society was forming itself. But when once that struggle was over, and the crosier was clearly separated from the sceptre, then began a more fearful struggle. Men had leisure to philosophize upon the faith which they had learned, and just at that time a great revival of ancient learning took place. Aristotle and Plato symbolized for them what had lain undeveloped in their minds ; here were categories formed, and genera and species classified. They thought that they had got a new organ for the discovery of truth. It was a new field, like an unknown world, a crusade into the regions of thought. The syllogistic form was given, and matter was all that was to be found. They were not slow in finding it ; there was matter enough for dispute in their new philosophy itself. Poor human nature ! hardly had it obtained possession of its new treasure, when it began to doubt of its reality. There were genera and species in plenty ; but how far were they the real representation of external objects, or only our way of viewing them ? It was an important question ; it was asking in fact whether our idea of external things was the true one ; or in the words of modern philosophy, how much was objective, how much subjective truth. But Clairvaux and Rievaulx had nothing to do with either Realism or Nominalism, and we pass them by. As long as the schools

confined themselves to metaphysics, their din probably did not even reach the Cistercian cloister. But in the middle ages, men were not Realists and Nominalists by halves, many of them pushed their principles into their notions of the Blessed Trinity itself. It was a fearful moment for the church. Here was humanity exulting in the discovery of a class of truths which it had forgotten. It was leaping with somewhat fantastic gestures about its new domain, when it came across it to enquire whether it was quite lawful ground. Certain it was that Nominalism, when applied to the highest Christian doctrine, became a sort of Sabellianism,<sup>1</sup> and Realism took the form of a new and nameless heresy. Here then was truth, as they thought, meeting truth face to face, and the fear or doubt presented itself with which they were to side.

At this juncture, there arose a man who attempted to reconcile, after his fashion, the Church and the intellect of the age. This man was Peter Abelard, who is to be considered as the personification of the bold and restless acuteness of the schools, as well as of the worldly-spirited clerks of the time.<sup>2</sup> This novel doctor was a canon of the Church, and at the same time a gay and handsome cavalier, whose love-songs and dialectics were equally in fashion. His first exploit was to banish from the schools the Realism which he found there. All was plain and easy to him ; the ideas of the soul were but arbitrary classifications emanating from itself ; they were real as conceptions, but nothing more. In this way it would follow, that rationality

<sup>1</sup> Petavius calls it the heresy of the Nominalists.

<sup>2</sup> Heloise says to him, *Quid te Canonicum et Clericum facere oportet. c. vii. Hist. Calam. Tanti quippe tam nominis eram et juventutis et formæ gratia preeminebam, ut quamcunque fœ-*

was no more the essence of man than the power of laughing, and that it was only in our way of looking upon it, that either could be the differentia of the class.<sup>1</sup> Abelard gained his point ; he completely won the day, and beat his master, William of Champeaux, out of the field ; but he did not see that like all other Rationalism, his system introduced a scepticism far deeper than itself. He did not see, that come what may of it, our ideas are the way in which we view the external world, and if they are merely arbitrary, and not in some way a representation of the truth, then we know nothing of any object beyond ourselves. However, as yet, he was but the bold and successful innovator, the idol of the schools, the triumphant logician ; but when he afterwards hid his head in the cloister of St. Denis, when Heloise, with bitter regrets for the world which she was leaving,<sup>2</sup> had taken the veil at Argenteuil, then the conceited logician became the dangerous theologian. He must needs remodel theology ! the old school was worn out.<sup>3</sup> It was founded

*minarum nostro dignarer amore, nullam vererer repulsam. c. vi. Quorum etiam carminum plerisque adhuc regionibus decantantur. Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Abelard seems to say this when he makes each individual to have his own form, for instance, in the language of the times, he makes Socratas to be the form of Socrates. This is true in one sense, but he seems to deny that humanitas is in any real sense, his form and he makes a separate form for each part, rationalitas, bipedalitas, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Tua me ad habitum traxit passio, non Dei dilectio. Ep. 4.*

<sup>3</sup> He tries to prove by the example of St. Paul that difficulty of faith is a merit. *Cito autem sive facile credit qui indiscrete atque improvide his quæ scivit prius acquisivit quam hoc in quod persuadetur ignota ratione quantum valet discutiat an adhibere ei fidem conveniat. Introd. ad Theod. 1060.*

on faith ; Plato and Aristotle would laugh at such a religion, and Abelard was ashamed of it. He would have a new religion founded on irrefragable argument, to suit the philosophic mind.<sup>1</sup> Thus he strove to allay the sudden recoil of his contemporaries upon themselves, the fright of humanity balancing between its reason and its faith. Two great schoolmen made shipwreck of their faith ; this he was not disposed to do, for with his great and glaring faults, his overweening conceit, and his whole soul still scarred with sins, and as yet, unhealed by his forced repentance, still, to do him justice, he would have been orthodox if he could. He therefore wished to make out that faith and reason were identical. He bade the youthful schoolmen, the men of march of mind, go on and prosper. There was no cause for alarm. The Christian was after all the great logician, and faith only an intellectual opinion about things unseen.<sup>2</sup> They need have no divided love between Aristotle and Christianity. Plato indeed was a Christian and a much better one than Moses and the Prophets, for he had foreseen and made out for himself the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Abelard is continually inconsistent with himself, often using orthodox language, and protesting that he means nothing against the faith of the Church, while his words are glaringly opposed to it. On his inconsistency, see St. Bernard's Letter to Innocent.

<sup>2</sup> Abelard Op. vol. i. 3, 28. Ed. Amb. Verbum Dei quod Græci λόγον vocant, solum Christum dicimus. Hinc et juxta nominis etymologiam, quicumque huic vero Verbo inherent vere Logici sunt. In another place, Charitas Dei per fidem sive rationis donum infusa. Introd. ad Theol. 1027.

<sup>3</sup> Dum multum sudat quo modo Platonem faciat Christianum, se probat Ethnicum. St. Bern. de err. Ab. c. iv. v. Martenne Thes. nov. Anecd. 5. p. 1152.

Oh, foolish Abelard ! he did not know what he himself was doing. If the human intellect could make out the blessed truth for itself, how knew he that it was not the creator of it ? How knew he that the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity itself was not an emanation from the mind of man, framing to itself its own conception of the supreme good ?<sup>1</sup> If he had looked on a few centuries, he would have seen in the same way a certain philosophy make out, that the existence of God might be but the product of the human intellect at play with its own notions. But intellect itself would have told him that such matters were not within its jurisdiction ; it can mount up indeed through earth and heaven up to the nature of God Himself ; but it can only say that such things as it conceives, may be. To rule that they are, is not its office. And so almost by the force of reason, Abelard was compelled to say that in his Introduction to Theology he did not profess to give the truth, but only his opinion of it. His Theology was a mere intellectual exercise, a keen encounter of wits, like a disputation in the schools. Faith itself he defined to be an *opinion* on things unseen. It happened to Abelard as might have been expected ; his reason broke under the gigantic task, like an inapt instrument

<sup>1</sup> Abelard does seem to say so of the Holy Trinity. Videtur autem nobis suprapositis personarum nominibus summi boni perfectio diligenter esse descripta ; ut cum videlicet prædicatur Deum esse Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus, eum summum bonum atque in omnibus perfectum hac distinctione Trinitatis intelligamus. Introd. 1, 7. It may, however, be said of Abelard, that in other places he neutralizes what at first sight seems Sabellianism. The language of a late biographer of St. Bernard, who almost makes Abelard his hero, is more unequivocally wrong.

applied to a work which it was never meant to perform. In the attempt to explain the doctrines of the Church in perfect conformity with human reason, he explained them away.<sup>1</sup> By another natural and almost logical consequence of his attempt, he not only shook the certainty of the faith, but he erred grievously in his exposition of it. And no wonder, authority to the theologian is what axioms and postulates are to the mathematician. It contains the data, without which he cannot stir a step. He then that would enfranchise theology from authority, must enfranchise Christianity from revelation ; and freedom from the Church in theology is like freedom from numbers in arithmetic. If Abelard had, on throwing away authority, become a sceptic, he would at least have been consistent ; but to throw it away and to expect to do as well without it was folly indeed.

Abelard was half conscious of his inconsistency, and felt it necessary to defend himself. How can we believe, he says, what we do not understand ?<sup>2</sup> The Church, by putting its doctrines into words, presents them to our understanding, and the Holy Fathers have used similes and metaphors, so as to bring them down to the level of our thoughts and to confute reasoners. Why then might not the phraseology and the metaphors be perfect expressions of what they meant, if they were to be used at all ? And this was what he attempted to do ; he tried to make ecclesiastical phra-

<sup>1</sup> Existimatio non apparentium. *Introd. ad Theol.* p. 977, 1061. Non tam nos veritatem dicere quam opinionis nostræ sensum quem efflagitant promulgare. p. 974, v. also 1047.

<sup>2</sup> Quid ad doctrinam proficit, si quod loqui volumus exponi non potest ut intelligatur. 985.



seology more intellectual, under the notion that unless it was a perfect expression of divine things, it must be false. And he proceeds to attack St. Augustine, St. Hilary, and St. Anselm, for using imperfect metaphors on the subject of the Trinity and the Incarnation.<sup>1</sup> But the blessed Saints knew far better than Abelard, how imperfect were their words ;<sup>2</sup> but they had to choose between saying that truth was unattainable, or that it was attainable as far as we can bear. The comparisons which they used were not mere metaphors, but a tracing out, in the creation, of shadows and types, of which God is the reality and the antitype. So too, human terminology, even though used by the Church, can but most faintly express the nature of the Incomprehensible Godhead, which eludes the grasp of words and ideas. And yet words are expressions of ideas, and ideas are expressions of the truth. Categories are the laws of our thoughts, and every man knows what he means when he uses the terms Substance and Relation. They are our way of viewing things, but they are real though they are ours. Much more when used of the everlasting God are they real and objective. God is a Substance in a higher and truer sense than we can know, and the eternal Relations between the Persons of the adorable Trinity are not mere notions of our

<sup>1</sup> Of St. Anselm he has the impudence to say, St. Anselmi similitudo suffragatur hæresi. 1085.

<sup>2</sup> Tendebar in Deum et offendi in meipsum. St. Ans. Prolog. 1. Ego certe scio quam multa figmenta pariat cor humanum, et quid est cor meum nisi cor humanum. de Trin. 4, i. Jam de iis quæ nec dicuntur ut cogitantur, nec cogitantur ut sunt, respondere incipiamus. De Trin. 5, 4.

minds, but real and true in a transcendent sense surpassing all human thought.

Abelard therefore was wrong in supposing, that because ecclesiastical phraseology was imperfect, that therefore it was false. On the contrary, since God is incomprehensible, Abelard's notion of the divine nature was necessarily false, since it pretended to be perfect. Again, he could never be sure that in adoring God, he was not in reality worshipping his own conception of the Deity, for on his own showing it might be an idea created by his intellect. But St. Augustine and St. Anselm knew that they were adoring the one true and right conception of Almighty God, which they had received from without, from the Holy Church who had embodied it in words. They therefore had a right to reason upon the faith, which Abelard had not ; for he had no data on which to philosophize. Their aim was to make the faith of the Church as intellectual, as that which is above intellect is capable of being ; Abelard tried to reduce it to the perfect level of the intellect, and after having fused it in this earthly crucible, he found that it had become, not the faith of the Church, but something else. But the Saint of Hippo might be bold, for he had long contemplated and adored the ever-blessed mystery, and he knew by loving faith that his burning heart looked not on an abstraction. The idea which he had received from the Church had grown upon him in beauty and intensity the more he had looked upon it. He therefore knew well what he did, when he answered the opponents of the blessed truth by reasoning. He bade them look on their own souls, and see whether they understood themselves ; and after confounding them with their ignorance of their own nature, he bids them

not despair.<sup>1</sup> Human nature is indeed a mystery, and yet it is the image of God. It is not a mere simile, but it is a true representation of God ; imperfect but not unreal. It contains within itself a trinity, a faint shadow of the everlasting Trinity ; yet shadow though it be, it does give us a true insight, as far as it goes, of the adorable mystery. And after all his efforts the Saint sinks upon his knees, and confesses his inability to comprehend this mighty Truth. So too St. Anselm ;<sup>2</sup> if by reason alone he professed to seek for God, it was because he knew that he had found Him already. To every word that he used he communicated the intensity of his own idea, so that they ceased to be mere words, and received a reality which they did not possess in themselves. But Abelard was neither St. Augustine nor St. Anselm, but only Peter Abelard. He did not choose to be a Christian doctor, so he became something very like a heretic ; and so he might have died, had not St. Bernard arisen to save him from becoming an heresiarch.

The first condemnation of Abelard at Soissons did not proceed from St. Bernard. It seems to have come from the teachers of the old school, whose influence he

<sup>1</sup> Cum in his quæ nostris corporalibus objacent sensibus, vel quod nos ipsi in interiore homine sumus, scientia comprehendendis laboremus nec sufficiamus, nec tamen impudenter in illa quæ supra sunt divina et ineffabilia pietas fidelis ardescit. De Trin. 5. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Puto quia ea ipsa ex magna parte, si vel mediocris ingenii est potest ipse sibi saltem sola ratione persuadere.—Monolog. 1. Ratione ejus (Roscellini) error demonstrandus est. De Fide in Trin. 3.

had destroyed.<sup>1</sup> His accusers were no match for him in learning, and he convicted them of ignorance and mistakes in theology ; and in the end, he seems to have been condemned in an arbitrary way. St. Bernard does not seem at first to have been unfavourably disposed to Abelard ; he visited the monastery of the Paraclete, of which Heloise was Abbess, and which was under Abelard's direction, and the nuns were rejoiced to see him. He does not appear to have read his works until they were sent to him by his friend William of St. Thierry.<sup>2</sup> "Of these things," he says

<sup>1</sup> There seems no reason to doubt Abelard's own graphic account of the council of Soissons, in his *Historia Calamitatum*. Berengarius's attack upon the Bishops who were present cannot be trusted in detail, from its manifest exaggeration, but its tone is that of a man attacking the love of ease of a high and dry school in authority. Berengarius's work is curious, as a specimen of a middle-age pamphlet. It is a flippant and profane attack on St. Bernard, which its author was obliged to defend in his maturer years by treating as a joke. *Si quid in personam hominis Dei dixi, joco legatur non serio*. In the same place, he excuses himself by saying that Aristotle attacked Socrates, and St. Jerome attacked St. Augustine. Ep. 18, inter ep. Abael. vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> It seems as if St. Bernard's attack on Abelard had been placed rather too early. It is true that Abelard points him out as his opponent before he became Abbot of St. Gildas, but from St. Bernard's own letters it is evident that he took no active part against him until his return to France from Brittany. And certain it is, that the same Abelard, apparently before he established himself permanently a second time at the Paraclete, but certainly after his retirement to St. Gildas, writes to St. Bernard about the *Charitas qua me præcipue amplecteris*. Abael. Op. p. vol. 1, p. 244. Again, William of Thierry finds it necessary to exhort St. Bernard strongly not to allow affection to prevent his taking an active part against Abelard.

to William, "I have hardly heard anything." It was during Lent that the Abbot's book came to him, and he would not break off the quiet of the season by plunging into Abelard's Introduction to Theology. But when Lent was over, and he had thoroughly examined the question, the whole importance of the matter burst upon him. Abelard's doctrines had spread far and wide ; men from all parts of Europe flocked to his lectures ; his books had crossed the seas, and were read beyond the Alps. There was a dangerous Rationalism infecting the intellectual youth of the rising generation. It had even spread among the cardinals, and Abelard had a party in the sacred college itself. It was high time to oppose the evil ; and none was so able to do so as St. Bernard. None had such an instinctive perception of Christian doctrine, or was more capable of laying his finger precisely on the question at issue. It was not hard, therefore, for a mind like his to see the shallowness of Abelard's principles. Nothing is more certain than that opinion and faith are not the same thing ; it is a mere fact that the Saints are as sure of the reality of their faith as of an object perceived by the senses, while opinion, by its very nature, is not certainty. And this was a fact which Abelard overlooked ; whether rightly or wrongly, faith is entirely independent of reason. Intellect, indeed, has a certainty of its own in its own sphere, in matters which are absolutely true or absolutely false ; but no one would pretend that such is the case with the subjects treated of in Christian doctrine, for they are above intellect.<sup>1</sup> Abelard might,

<sup>1</sup> Quod intellexisti non est de eo quod ultra quæras, aut si est non intellexisti. De Cons. 5, 3.

indeed, have said that truth about the nature of God was unattainable on earth, but to say that it was attainable by reason alone was manifestly untrue.

This was the moral of all Cistercian teaching, and the history of their quarrel with the schools ; they taught men to seek certainty elsewhere. "The Spirit of God will lead you into all truth. What means all Truth ?" said a voice heard one Advent in the cloister of Rievaulx. "It means that one truth which makes all things true. For in one sense, all things that are are true ; for whatever is false, is not at all. But that truth into which the apostles were brought, was that in which all things are, and which is in all things, in which there is nothing false, nothing ambiguous, nothing deceptive ; and this Truth is seen by the heart, not by the flesh." And that this line of teaching was the right one to save the age from Rationalism, was proved by the event. Abelard's influence melted before St. Bernard. He challenged the Saint to dispute with him at the Council of Soissons. St. Bernard at first refused to dispute with one who had been trained to disputation from his youth ; besides it was a question of authority, not of disputation. At length, however, when he found that the truth was likely to suffer from his refusal, he consented, at the instance of his friends, with tears in his eyes, determined, according to our Lord's rule, not to think beforehand what he should say. When the day came, the town of Soissons was crowded with men from all parts of France. The king and the Bishops were there, and on the other hand the noisy and tumultuous men of the schools, the partisans of Abelard. All the world was there to witness the encounter between the two first men of the age, the representatives of opposite

principles. To the surprise of all, after St. Bernard had given an account of the opinion to be canvassed, Abelard, instead of replying, appealed to the Pope. Abelard had himself given the challenge, and was not a man wont to be intimidated. Besides, St. Bernard, who once stopped a persecution raised against the Jews, was not a likely man to allow any violence to be used against Abelard's person, either by king or populace. One account, however, says that he appealed to Rome, from dread of a popular tumult. Another account says, that when he attempted to speak, his memory failed him and he could not utter a word. Amidst these conflicting accounts, it is safest to judge by the result. Abelard started on his way to Rome to support the appeal which he had made ; it was by no means a desperate case, for he had, as has been noticed above, a party in the Sacred College. But by the time that he had got as far as Cluny, his heart had failed him ; there appears in many passages of his writings a hesitation, as though if he could but have reconciled Aristotle and the Church, he would have been orthodox ; his conscience was not at rest, and the sight of St. Bernard at the council had awakened it anew. His had been a long and weary life, made up of headstrong passions and signal misfortunes ; and his troubled spirit longed for rest. When therefore the Abbot of Citeaux came to Cluny, and offered to make his peace with St. Bernard, Abelard was prepared to make a confession of faith which was equivalent to a retraction of his errors ; and when the Pope's letter arrived condemning his opinions, it found him already prepared to submit. Abelard broken in health and spirit lived for three years in the peaceful cloister of Cluny, and died a sincere penitent in 1142.

Thus most effectually did Cistercian teaching fulfil its task. Abelard left no school behind him. His work in the schools had been simply one of destruction. His teaching had nothing positive ; and when once he had hidden himself in the cloister of Cluny, nothing more is heard of him.

It was easy therefore to confute Abelard so far ;<sup>1</sup> but St. Bernard had another task to perform. How were the sons of the Church to recover a healthy tone after being spoiled by this baneful teaching ?<sup>2</sup> For this purpose it was not enough to refute, or even to substitute truth for error, they must also learn to love the truth. And to effect this was the object of all Cistercian teaching. A moral discipline was required to heal the diseased will. With a philosophy, in reality far deeper than that of Abelard, though it did not profess to be philosophy at all, St. Bernard made the acceptance of religious truth to depend upon the will. Faith he defined to be a willing and certain foretaste of a truth not yet made manifest. Truth is offered for acceptance, not to the intellect, but to the conscience. The Church does for us the office of the intellect ; it puts the faith for us into an intelligible form. And so the creed, the intellectual object, as it may be called, of our faith, comes to us from without. It is a certain,

<sup>1</sup> St. Bernard went straight to the point when he attacked Abelard as holding opinions contrary to reason, as well as to faith. *Quid enim, he says, magis contra rationem, quam ratione rationem conari transcendere.*

<sup>2</sup> The Abbé Ratisbonne, in his beautiful *Life of St. Bernard*, compares Abelard's doctrines to Kant's Antinomies of pure reason. This is paying Abelard's philosophical powers a great compliment. He is much more like Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity.



definite, and substantive thing, embodied in words by the Church, and coming to us in a clear, unbroken sound, for the Church speaks but one language. Just as words are to us the interpretation of what we feel, by giving us a classification for our sensations, so do the words of the Holy Church interpret for us what we know of God. But St. Bernard went deeper than this ; the real and heavenly object of our faith comes to us through the Sacraments, and so God Himself is the real cause of our knowledge of Him ; and it is love, by which we are united to Him, which fills up, as it were, the outline of the Church, and gives a meaning to our imperfect words beyond what they have of their own nature. Love, therefore, is the proper antidote to Rationalism ; and St. Bernard did much more towards healing the wounds of the Church, when he preached his Sermons on the Canticles, than when he refuted Abelard, in his letter to Pope Innocent. Why, indeed, should he seek by premiss and conclusion for Him whom he has found already by love ? “To those who thus seek him, says St. Bernard,<sup>1</sup> the Lord cries out, *Noli me tangere*, Touch me not ; that is, Quit this erring sense ; lean on the Word, learn to go by faith : faith, which cannot err ; which seizes on what is invisible, feels not the need of sense, passes the bounds of human reason, the use of nature, the bonds of experience. Why ask the eye for what it cannot see ? Why stretch forth the hand to grope for what is above it ? Let faith pronounce of me what is not unworthy of my majesty. Learn to hold for certain, to follow in safety, what it teaches thee. Touch me not ; for I have not yet ascended to

<sup>1</sup> In Cant. 28.

my Father. As if when He has once ascended, He would either be willing to be loved, or we capable of touching him. Yea, but thou shalt be capable, by love, not by the touch ; by desire, not by the eye ; by faith, not by sense. Faith in the depth of its mystic bosom comprehends what is the length and breadth, and depth and height. Thou shalt touch Him with the hand of faith, the finger of desire, the embrace of devotion ; thou shalt touch Him with the eye of the heart. And will He then be black ?<sup>1</sup> Nay, the beloved is white and red. Beautiful exceedingly is He who is surrounded with the red flowers of the rose and the white lily of the valleys, that is, the choirs of martyrs and of virgins ; and who, sitting in the midst of them, is himself both a virgin and a martyr. Ten thousand times ten thousand are around Him, but needest thou fear lest thou shouldst mistake some other for Him, when thou seekest Him whom thou lovest ? Nay, thou wilt not hesitate whom to select out of them all. Easily wilt thou recognize Him out of the thousands more beautiful than all ; and thou wilt say, This is He that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the multitude of His strength."

Before such teaching as this, no wonder that Rationalism fled away ; cold and dead as it is, it cannot hold before warmth and life. But Cistercian teaching had a great influence on the Church after it. Its opposition to the scholastic method was most salutary ; it gave a breathing time to the Church, and prepared it to receive the teaching of the great schoolmen of the thirteenth century. The church was not yet ready for the schools, or rather the schools were not ready for the church ;

<sup>1</sup> Song of Solomon, i. 5.

men must learn to love the truth before they can safely philosophize upon it. St. Bernard and St. Aelred were not mere negative opponents of Rationalism ; there is a great deal of positive theology in their works, dressed in the commanding eloquence of St. Bernard and the sweet language of St. Aelred. No one can read the masterly refutation of the Errors of Gilbert de la Poree without wondering at the acuteness as well as the deep knowledge of theology possessed by St. Bernard, the more wonderful because Gilbert's errors belong rather to the Pantheism of the thirteenth than to the Rationalism of the twelfth century. The questions so beautifully treated of in the Sermons on the Canticles are precisely the same as those which appear in the Summa of St. Thomas, how the nature of God is very oneness, and there is nothing accidental in Him, how angels see all things in the Word, how the soul of man is naturally eternal, how grace differs from the substance of the soul. In St. Aelred the same thing is observable ; none can help being struck with his clear and orthodox language on the subject of the Incarnation, while he rejects what he calls scholastic subtleties. The influence of St. Anselm is very easily to be traced in his writings, so that in some parts of his Mirror of Charity he is much more of a schoolman than St. Bernard. Still it is true that the office of the Cistercians was to oppose the scholastic philosophy, which the age could not as yet bear. Citeaux purified the schools by keeping aloof from them ; it was reserved for another order to make an inroad into the schools themselves, and to purify them by establishing Christ's banner in the midst of them, and marking them with His cross. Thus God ever in his goodness provides for the wants of the Church. First came St. Anselm, the saintly philosopher, to stir

up the intellect of the Church ; and then St. Bernard and St. Aelred to check the pride of intellect, and then last of all the great Saint, who could safely doubt of all, for he knew beforehand how to solve all doubts at the foot of the crucifix, St. Thomas Aquinas.

LIVES  
OF  
THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

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**St. William,**  
ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

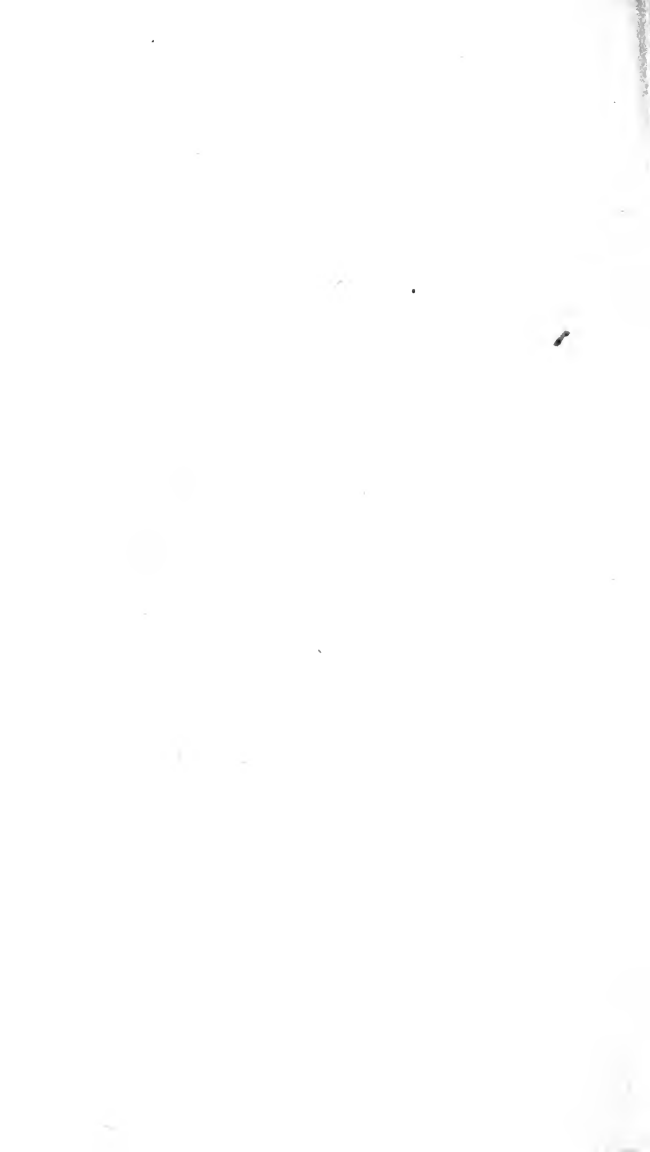
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MANSUETI HÆREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

LONDON :  
JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.  

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1844.



## ERRATA.

Page 17, line 15, for " St. Luke's day in the following year,"  
read " St. Luke's day following."

Page 27, line 13, for "belonging" read "belonged."

Page 27, line 14, for "or" read "nor."

Page 31, line 29, for "when" read "how."





LIFE OF

**St. William,**

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, A. D. 1140-1154.

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CHAPTER I.

*St. William in prosperity.*

ST. WILLIAM was the son of Lord Herbert, by Emma of Blois, sister to Stephen, king of England, and was born about the latter end of the eleventh century. Little is known of the early part of his life ; and he must have been somewhat advanced in years before he entered upon the field of public action. More than ordinary care seems to have been paid to his education : his parents were not forgetful of the many dangers which beset the path of boyhood ; for when he was quite young, they committed him to the charge of a preceptor, under whose care he made great progress in general literature and the studies of the times. Nor was he remarkable only for his learning. There were in his character the elements and ground-work of what he was to be hereafter. Great purity and integrity of life, exceeding beneficence to the poor, together with a kind and amiable disposition formed the soil in which

the seeds of the saintly character were to be sown, which, as we shall see in the sequel, took deep root, and in the end brought forth fruit unto perfection.

But this perfection came not without difficulty and reverses. God's ways for fashioning and moulding His Saints are manifold : some He leads on and on in holy innocence even from the waters of the Font, and suffers them not to be led astray, nor their Baptismal robe to be spotted by the taints of sin ; others He tries by affliction, others by the fierce assaults of Satan, and the powers of evil, while others He exposes to the vanities and allurements of the world. He sets them in high places ; He gives them riches ; He allows them to be courted and honoured, and then by some sudden reverse, by the failure of long cherished hopes or plans, He makes them see the utter nothingness of the world. They wake as from a dream, and to their astonishment find they have been feeding upon vanities, and that the only reality is the Cross : and thus even these are led onwards to perfection, and in the end become the chosen ones of God. They do indeed bring forth the fruit of saintliness, although for a while the good seed seemed well nigh choked, and they were judged by others to be tending in their course towards a miserable and hopeless end. To this latter class does he belong, whose life we have undertaken to write, and not to anticipate the events in his history, it may be briefly stated, that in his case the graces of the Saint shone not forth, until he had endured the abasements and humiliation of the Penitent.

William's position in the world and circumstances were against him : he was of the Royal family, and therefore thrown at once into the temptations and corruptions of a Court life and Court influence. His

uncle, Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, and the Pope's Legate was his patron, and to him he owed his promotion. Henry was doubtless a man of much ability, and, as a statesman, full of intrigue and court policy, was well suited for the times in which he lived ; but viewing him as a Bishop and not as a statesman, he cannot claim our respect or admiration : we cannot acquit him of great worldly-mindedness, not to say actual want of principle. Such was the man to whom William was under great obligation, and it need hardly be said that it requires a mind of no ordinary uprightness and independence to escape the evil effects which are almost invariably the consequences of being patronized and advanced by those in authority. The courts of Kings and lordly palaces are not fit schools for the Church's Saints ; few pass through them without feeling their evil influence, to many they have proved their ruin. In addition to this,<sup>1</sup> William was brought up in the midst of riches and pleasures, those sad impediments to progress in the spiritual life : and that they had a bad effect upon his character is proved from the unfitness which is recorded of him for labour or any great exertion of body or mind, which led to a habit of occupying himself in matters of minor importance when more urgent duties were demanding his attention.<sup>2</sup>

But we will now proceed at once to his history : he first comes before us as Treasurer of the Cathedral Church of York, an office to which he was promoted from personal merit, and which he discharged in a very exemplary manner. This gave him the opportunity of exercising his charitable disposition, and on being made

<sup>1</sup> John Prior Hagust. ap. Twysden. a. 1146. p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> ib. p. 276.

Treasurer, he distributed his own wealth amongst the poor, "considering no treasure more precious than giving to those in poverty."<sup>3</sup> The year in which he was made Treasurer is not known, and there is no notice of dates respecting him until the year 1140, from which time we are able to place the various events of his life in their proper order.

On the fifth of February, 1140, the venerable Thurstan, Archbishop of York, died :<sup>4</sup> he <sup>A. D.</sup> 1140. had been Archbishop for six and twenty years, and had governed his diocese with much vigour and godly prudence. He had been chaplain to King Henry I., who found in him a most valuable counsellor, so much so that during the King's life he is said to have managed all the affairs of England and Normandy.<sup>5</sup> He founded eight religious houses, and among them the once celebrated Abbey of Fountains, to which he ordained one Richard, a Benedictine monk, as the first Abbot, Dec. 15th, 1132. A short time before his death he resigned his see, and retired as a monk to the Cluniac Abbey of Pontefract, where he finished his course in peace and tranquillity.<sup>6</sup>

At his death, the spirit of contention and discord began to show itself amongst the clergy of York. For a whole year, the Dean and Chapter and the rest of the Clergy, in whom the power of election was vested, were divided in opinion as to a fit person to fill the vacant see. At this period the English Church was suffering

<sup>3</sup> Bromton, ap. Twysden. p. 1041. Capgrave. fol. 310, 2.

<sup>4</sup> John Hagust. p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> Bolland, Act. SS. in vita S. Gul. June 8. Stubbs, ap. Twysden. p. 1714.

<sup>6</sup> Bromton, p. 1028. Dugdale Monast. Angl. vol. v. p. 286—8. Manriquez Ann. Cisterc. a. 1143. cap. ii. § 5.

under the commotion to which the great ecclesiastical questions of the day had given rise. The Bishops and superior Ecclesiastics were necessarily politicians, and were drawn into the party and state feuds that were then agitating the land. Moreover the whole country was in a state of especial excitement, for Stephen had usurped the crown, and most of the Bishops who had sworn allegiance to the Empress Mathilda, had turned round and were now in spite of their oaths siding with the king. Mathilda herself was in England, making the utmost endeavours to gain the kingdom, and the nation was suffering from all the horrors of a civil war. The two parties found their representatives among the York Clergy ; and as each made it a great point to get a man of their own opinions, and there seemed no chance of their coming to a decision without some external interference, at last the Bishop of Winchester interposed, and at his advice they elected one Henry de Coilly, who was also a nephew of King Stephen's and at this time Abbot of Caen.

The Pope however declared that he could not be elected Archbishop, unless he gave up his present preferment. This we must suppose he was unwilling to do, for in January, 1141, the Dean <sup>A. D.</sup> 1141. and Chapter again assembled for the election, and now the majority decided in favour of William the Treasurer,<sup>7</sup> the subject of this memoir, whose reputation for purity of life and general goodness, pointed him out as a fit person for this important station.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Bromton. p. 1028.

<sup>8</sup> Alford, vol. iv. pars post, p. 20, quoting Roger de Hoveden, Matthew of Westminster, Trivet, and others, state that Henry Murdach was elected at the same time as St. William ; but this

This appointment would of course cause much displeasure amongst the supporters of Mathilda: they would naturally say that it was a piece of court patronage; and in this they were probably right. Stephen had shown himself no friend to the Church, or at least to her Bishops. Before Mathilda entered the kingdom, he had seized the Bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln, thrown them into dungeons, got possession of their castles, and made a threat of starving the former the means of obtaining the submission of the Bishop of

seems incorrect, and for the following reasons. 1st. Henry Murdach was not made Abbot of Fountains, according to Dugdale, (*Dugdale's Monast. Angl.*, vol. v. p. 288. See also *Burton's Monast. Ebor.*) until 1143, and, according to John of Hexham, until 1146; and it is certain that he was Abbot at the time of his election to the see of York, in 1148. 2nd. It is probable that at the time of St. William's election, Henry was Abbot of Vauclair, from whence he was sent by St. Bernard to Fountains; (*Vid. Historiens de France*, vol. xiii. p. 698. *Chron. Alberici Trium Fontium monachi.*) his name occurs in an ancient chronicle, under the year 1134, as the first Abbot of Vallis Clara, and therefore he must have been there more than nine years. He had been one of those sent from Clairvaux, at the founding of Fountains in 1132. (*Vid. Manriq. Ann. Cist.* 1132. cap. 8. § 6.)

The author of *Gallia Christiana* in his account of the monastery of Vallis Clara (Vauclair) gives the following dates:—(*Gallia Xtiana*, vol. ix. p. 633.)

Founded 1134.

Henry Murdach first Abbot, 1135.

Abbot of Fountains, 1138.

Archbishop of York, 1148.

It is possible that Henry Murdach might have become known to the Clergy of York, during his two years' residence at Fountains, 1132–1134, and so might have been nominated by part of the electors to fill the vacant see, in 1140, although he was absent, but there seems no reason to suppose that he was in England at the time of the election.

Ely. His own brother, who was the Pope's legate, had been driven to summon him to defend his conduct before a Council. Stephen stopped its proceedings by force, and completed his crime by seizing from the Altar the remainder of the Bishop of Salisbury's property, which he had on his misfortunes given to his Church. Some years later we find him trying to force an Archbishop of York to consecrate a Bishop of Durham against his will, and refusing a safe conduct to the Pope's legate. However, general dissatisfaction or suspicion was not a sufficient ground for nullifying the election of William : certain definite charges must be brought against him : and such a charge was forthcoming, though it proceeded from a person not calculated to add to its weight by his own character. As soon as it was seen how the election was likely to turn, Osbert, Archdeacon of York, who is described as a man fond of power, and who on this occasion was excited, as it appears, by feelings of envy, prejudiced the minds of the better part of the electors against William, notwithstanding the Clergy generally, as well as the people, were strongly in favour of his election. But still his allegation deserved the most serious attention. There was no denying the prominent part which William, Earl of York,<sup>1</sup> the king's minis-

<sup>9</sup> John Hagust. p. 268.

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that this William was the first titular earl of this county. He was William le Gros, of the house of Champagne, and Earl of Albemarle, and was made Earl of Yorkshire, or, as some say, of York, by Stephen, in 1138, after the victory over the Scots, at the famous battle of the Standard. On the same occasion, Robert de Ferrers was made Earl of Derbyshire. "*Willielmum de Albamarla in Eboracensi, et Robertum de Ferrers in Derbyensi scyra Comites fecit.*" (Vid. Rich. Hagust. de bello Standardii. ap. Twysden. p. 323, and Drake's Antiquities of York. B. i. ch. viii. p. 349.)

ter had taken in the election. He had shown the greatest anxiety that it should fall on William, so much so, that it is said by some writers that he actually commanded the Dean and Chapter to elect him in obedience to an order from the king. If this were so, the election would, strictly speaking, have been illegal, and we shall see as we go on, that this was the point on which the whole dispute eventually turned, and which alone was sufficient to nullify the proceeding. This Earl of York gave occasion also to Walter the Archdeacon of London's opposition to St. William. The Archdeacon supposing that the liberty of election was interfered with by this mandate from the king, was proceeding to Stephen to expostulate with him on the subject: on his road he was intercepted by the Earl, who took him prisoner and confined him at his castle at Biham.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the opposition, William after his election was introduced to<sup>3</sup> Stephen at A. D.  
1141. Lincoln, who received him with much kindness and friendship, and confirmed him in the Archiepiscopal lands and possessions. This however was not sufficient to put down the party opposed to William, and the king was not in a condition to enforce his election even if he had wished to do so; in consequence nothing could be determined upon, neither party would give way, and at last Henry, the Bishop of Winchester, advised William to appeal to the Pope

<sup>2</sup> Biham, *Bytham*, or *Bitham*, is situated in the S. E. part of Lincolnshire. The Abbey of Vaudey, or De Valle Dei, was first founded here by William Earl of Albermarle in 1147. The monks however finding some inconveniences in this place removed to Vaudy, in the parish of Edenham, in the same county. (Dugdale. vol. v. p. 489.)

<sup>3</sup> John Hagust. ubi sup.



and to seek an audience at Rome. Innocent II. was at this time Pope, and had occupied the chair of St. Peter since the year 1130. Theobald, however, the Archbishop of Canterbury, of whom we shall have occasion to speak more particularly hereafter, was connected with the party opposed to Stephen ; and hearing of the election, and how it had been conducted, he sent immediately to Rome and anticipated William's messengers. He gave a most unfavourable view of William's case, declaring that the election was null and void, and according to the Cistercian Annalist, who however is of no authority whatever, he laid some very heavy charges against William's private character.<sup>4</sup>

William's messengers on arriving at Rome found that others had been beforehand with them, and instead of receiving from the Pope the confirmation of the election, together with the Pallium, returned back to York with an order from the Pope that William should appear before him at Rome to answer for himself. Matters now took a more definite shape, and William's accusers became more numerous and hostile, and they seemed determined never to give way until their point was gained. A fresh charge was now brought against his friends, and that was simony : they said he had gained his election from bribery. This however was never proved against him, neither was it, as

<sup>4</sup> Describing him as, "*modicum scientiâ, prudentiaque inexpertem, sed quod longe deterius fœdum moribus et non occultis vitiis defamatum.*" We may here observe that there is nothing in St. William's history, as far as we are able to judge of it, not even St. Bernard's strong language against him, to warrant the above remarks. St. Bernard's strongest and most unfavourable expressions need not affect St. William's private character ; and Manriquez the annalist (*Vid. his Ann. Cist. 1143. cap. iii. § 1.*) is of the 17th century.

we shall see, the charge, on the truth or falsehood of which, his cause was tried at Rome. However, it was so far believed to be true, as to have been the cause of Robert Bisech, Prior of Hexham, giving up the government of his Priory, which was in William's diocese, and retiring as a monk to St. Bernard at Clairvaux.

Early in the year 1142, William's cause was heard at Rome, in the Consistory of Pope Innocent. A. D.  
1142. Walter, the Archdeacon of London, appeared with the charges of several Abbots and Priors against him ; and it was ordered that all parties, both those present and those who were absent, should appear at Rome for the final settlement of the question, on the third Sunday in Lent in the following year. Amongst his accusers were William, Abbot of Rievaulx ; Richard, Abbot of Fountains ; Cuthbert, Prior of Gisburn ; Wallevus, Prior of Kirkham ; and Rodbertus Hospitalis ;<sup>6</sup>—Cistercians, it will be observed, and therefore friends of St. Bernard.

In obedience to the Pope's commands, the above mentioned Abbots and Priors met at A. D.  
1143. Rome, in the beginning of 1143, together with William and his coadjutors. His accusers then layed their charges before the Pope. The sum of which was, that William, Earl of York, had appeared as the King's minister, and had in the presence of the Chapter, and before their election had been

<sup>5</sup> John Hagust. p. 271.

<sup>6</sup> The same Wallevus does not occur either in Dugdale or Burton, but seems to be St. Waltheof. His father, whose name he bore, is often called Gallevus ; and that he was Prior of Kirkham is evident from Fordun Scot. vi. 7. *Hospitalis* is the person appointed in a monastery to receive and attend upon strangers. Vid. Ducange. in text. John Hagust. p. 272.

decided on, commanded William the Treasurer to be elected Archbishop by the King's authority. It does not appear that any *definite* charge of simony was alleged against him, though other complaints were made, and therefore perhaps this amongst them : still one should have thought that if any act of simony had been committed, it would have constituted at least one of the charges publicly layed before the Pope, and have been treated as of far greater importance than the question of the validity of the election. This is certainly an argument in William's favour : for it is hardly credible that the Pope would have given the decision he did, had he considered William in the slightest degree guilty of this great sin, but would have tried the cause on that ground alone ; and if the accused had been found guilty, would have deposed him at once as utterly unfit to feed the flock of Christ, which had been purchased not with money, but with the precious Blood of the Lamb of God. It is fair then to suppose that the way in which the Pope treated the case showed that he did not consider the charge of simony sufficiently well established for him to proceed against him on that ground alone. He decreed that if the Dean of York would swear that the King's mandate had not been given, that is, that the election had been lawfully and canonically made before, and that if William on his part would swear that he had not sought for the office by any act of bribery, he might be lawfully consecrated. The Dean of York was absent, and whether it was known that he would not take the oath, or whether it was in case he should be prevented by any just cause from so doing, it was requested that certain fit persons might be allowed to swear instead of the Dean : this, as we shall see in the sequel, was brought

against William as a proof of the illegality of the election and of the interference of the King. The Pope however granted the request : nothing more was done at Rome on this occasion, and with a light heart at the thought of his troubles being now well nigh ended, William returned to England. The storm seemed now to have passed away ; all looked bright and fair, and William appeared before the English Clergy at Winchester, to receive the rite of Consecration.

Henry the Legate summoned the Clergy to a Council at Winchester : many of the dignitaries of the Church were present : it was a time of great rejoicing and exultation, and the people were so urgent in favour of William, that they seemed rather to command his consecration, as if with authority, than to show their great desire for it by the mere expression of their feelings. In obedience to the Pope's injunction, the Dean of York was summoned to the Council to take the oath which we have mentioned. He excused himself on the ground of the disturbances which one William Comyn was causing in the diocese of Durham, which was now vacant, and to which he had been elected, but had not yet been consecrated owing to these said disturbances.

It will furnish some further view into the history of times so different from our own, if, at the risk of losing sight for a while of our main subject, we turn our attention very briefly to these disturbances. Godfrey had been Bishop of Durham, and died on the sixth of May, 1140. A few days before his death, William Comyn, Chancellor to the king of Scotland, and also Archdeacon of Worcester, came to Durham to visit the Bishop : he was well known to him, and had been partly

educated by him. Comyn, when he saw that the Bishop's end was approaching, prevailed upon certain of the Bishop's private Clergy and attendants to promise that they would give up the Castle to him as soon as the Bishop was dead. Meanwhile the Bishop died, upon which Comyn exacted this also from them, that they would conceal his death until he had seen the king of Scotland and should have returned to Durham : he was bent on gaining the Bishopric, and therefore it was necessary for him to gain the king's countenance and assistance in his attempts to obtain it. The necessary steps were taken for keeping the body until its interment,<sup>7</sup> and from Tuesday until Friday the Castle was closed, the Prior and Monks were refused admittance, and the Bishop's death carefully concealed. At length the report became general that the Bishop was dead, and on the Friday they delivered up the body for burial, pretending however that the Bishop was only just dead. The funeral took place on Saturday. On Sunday Comyn returned from the Scottish Court, and taking the government of the Castle entirely into his own hands, he admitted the Prior and Monks to an audience ; he then assumed the supreme control, disposed of and ordered all things as he pleased, treating those whom he saw were willing to yield to him, with much courtesy, but exercising extreme severity towards those who opposed his wishes. The Barons of the country, with few exceptions, he easily gained over to his side, and he next proceeded to gain the favour of the Empress Mathilda. The circumstances of the time favoured his purpose, for it so happened that

<sup>7</sup> Proinde quia cadaver aliter teneri non potuit, evisceratus a suis Episcopis, &c.

Stephen had been lately taken prisoner at the battle of Lincoln, February 2, 1141, and the fortunes of the Empress seemed on the ascendant. She had been just received with great favour by the citizens of London (in those days one of the most powerful and important bodies in the kingdom,) and had proceeded to hold her court there as Sovereign of England. Thither the King of Scotland and his Chancellor betook themselves. The King prevailed upon the Empress to give her consent to Comyn's election to the Bishopric of Durham, and she was about to invest him solemnly with the Pastoral Staff and Ring, when the court was suddenly dissolved in great confusion, a conspiracy having been formed against the Empress by the citizens of London, who had already made herself odious to them by her haughty behaviour and exorbitant demands. She fled for safety first to Oxford, and then to Winchester, where she was besieged by the very persons who a few days before had delivered London into her hands and saluted her as Queen. This revolution frustrated the ambitious designs of Comyn : nothing daunted however by the failure of his plans, he returned to Durham, where he remained for three years, giving vent to his cruel and rapacious disposition, but keeping on good terms with the monks,<sup>8</sup> with a view to having their assistance in the prosecution of his designs.

For some time no steps were taken for filling the vacant see ; but owing to the great disadvantages arising from such a state of things, the Chapter at

<sup>8</sup> “ Multa in Episcopatu cupiditatis imo crudelitatis signa reliquit. Monachis tamen jocundus semper et affabilis erat, a quibus se promovendum sperabat.”

length sent the Prior of Durham to the Chapter at York, to consult with them as to the best measures to be pursued towards the election of a fit person to the Bishopric. Messengers were sent to Rome to seek advice from the Pope, from whom they received permission to elect whomsoever they would.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly the Prior and Archdeacon of Durham, with several of the regulars connected with the diocese, met together in the chapel of St. Andrew at York (being unable to carry on the election at Durham) and chose as their Bishop, William de St. Barbara, Dean of York Cathedral, March 14, 1143. Henry, Bishop of Winchester, who from the first had been of great assistance to the people of Durham against the intruder Comyn, and who had excommunicated him and his adherents, having examined the letters from the Pope, and seen that all had been done duly and in order, introduced the Bishop elect to king Stephen, who gave his consent to the election ; and on the twentieth of June, 1143, he was consecrated by Henry at Winchester, in the presence of seven other Bishops. Meanwhile William Comyn, as soon as he heard of what was going on at York, did all in his power to stop the election, by watching the roads, and giving orders that all persons proceeding to York should be intercepted and given up to him : he also sent pretended letters from the Chapter, forbidding the election ; these however were indignantly rejected, and his designs being still frustrated, all that he could now do, was to prevent the new Bishop coming to Durham : he therefore commenced a system of most cruel and savage persecution against the clergy and all who he supposed sided with him. Some few of

<sup>9</sup> John Hagulstad, p. 272.

the Barons, who from the first had opposed Comyn and his party, and were now steadfast in their allegiance to the Bishop, prevailed upon him to come to Durham. Yielding to their entreaties, the Bishop entered the city the morning after the Assumption, when several of the Barons came and did homage to him ; amongst them one Roger de Coyniers, who had fortified a strong hold in the diocese for the use of the Bishop, who indeed was soon obliged to retreat thither for refuge : for the cruelty and rage of Comyn knew no limits, his system of persecution was frightful. He continued for many days to put to tortures of the most excruciating kind all those who were on the Bishop's side. The city presented the most miserable appearance ; the divine offices were suspended, the churches profaned, instruments of torture and persons suffering the greatest agonies from them were seen in all the streets : nothing could exceed the fury and licentiousness of the intruder. The Bishop was kept in continual siege, first in one fortress and then in another. A truce was made between him and Comyn, but was soon broken by the latter. At length after a series of the most wild excesses, after much profaneness and sacrilege, the wretched man was induced, for reasons unknown, to implore forgiveness at the Bishop's hands.

It will be now confessed that the Dean of York and Bishop elect of Durham, had had business enough on his hands to constitute a very fair excuse for absenting himself from the Council of Winchester, where we left William waiting for him to give evidence in his favour, according to the Pope's injunction, before his own consecration. The suspense of both the new Prelates ended about the same time. As proxies for the Dean of York, there had appeared Ralph Nuel, Bishop of the Orkneys,



Severinus, Abbot of York, and Benedict, Abbot of Whitby, who took the oath required, and afforded the necessary satisfaction for the Archbishop elect. On the 26th of September William was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester, amidst great rejoicings both of clergy and people ; and on St. Luke's day following, the Bishop attended by William, Archbishop of York, and the Bishop of Carlisle, was solemnly enthroned, and at the same time William Comyn was admitted to the commencement of his penitence, and promised in the presence of the Bishops to make satisfaction as far as that was possible for the injuries he had committed.<sup>1</sup>

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## CHAPTER II.

### *St. William opposed by St. Bernard.*

IMMEDIATELY after his consecration, William returned to York, where we have no notice of his proceedings except that on St. Luke's day in the following year he assisted as we have seen at the enthronization of the Bishop of Durham. This would lead us to suppose that the Bishop of Durham was on good terms at least openly with William, and that it was not from any ill will that he refused to take the oath. William was not permitted to remain long in peace and quiet ; fresh trials awaited him and a new and formida-

A. D.  
1143.

<sup>1</sup> This sketch is necessarily imperfect, in as much as a full narration of all particulars would form almost a history of itself. All the circumstances are given at great length by Simeon Dunelmensis, *Hist. de Dunelmens. Eccles. ap. Twysden*, and by the *Monachus Dunelmensis de Episcop. Dunelmens*: in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, p. i. p. 710—717, to whom we refer the reader.

ble opponent appeared in the ranks of his enemies. This was St. Bernard.

On September 24th, 1143, Pope Innocent died, and on the very same day on which William had been consecrated, Celestine II. was chosen as the new Pope. The news of these two appointments had no sooner reached the ears of St. Bernard, than we find him applying himself, with his wonted zeal and earnestness, against what he supposed was an uncanonical and invalid ordination. It may be asked how St. Bernard, the Abbot of Clairvaux, at such a distance from England, should either know of or interfere with the ecclesiastical affairs of England? In answer to this question, it will be sufficient to mention that at this time and for some years previously, St. Bernard had literally been conducting the affairs both ecclesiastical and civil of the whole western Church. Compelled by the earnest entreaties of the Pope to leave the solitude of the peaceful Clairvaux which he so dearly loved, he found himself thrust into the noise and tumult of men and nations : he it was who settled the disputes of princes, as well as the strifes and contentions amongst the Clergy. For the space of ten years 1130–1140, he was as it were the great moving principle in all the important events of that period. Through his exertions Pope Innocent II. was acknowledged by the principal Christian Sovereigns, and the Antipope Anaclete compelled to give way to the all powerful influence of this man of God. We find him in Aquitaine settling the disputes of William the Duke of that province, whose haughty and rebellious spirit he so completely subdued, that he passed the remainder of his life in penitence, and died a thoroughly altered man. We find him at the Councils of Rheims, and Pisa, at Milan, where he compelled

the unprincipled Archbishop Anselm to recognize the authority of the Pope. By his preaching and his wondrous miracles, he brought the turbulent population into a state of peace and quiet, and won numberless converts to a religious and penitential life : in short the whole western world was at this time depending on St. Bernard. Wherever he went crowds attended him : his door was always thronged with people wishing to consult him. High and low, the beggar and the prince, popes and prelates, laymen and clerks, the sinner and the saint, one and all sought from him counsel and guidance, so wonderfully did the grace of God shine forth in all he did or said. And can we wonder then that the holy and religious in our own country should have communicated their distresses and their wants to this great Apostle, raised up, as it appears, and endued with extraordinary grace and power from on high, for the very purpose of protesting against, and eradicating the abuses and corruptions which then existed, and which so sadly marred and spoiled the beauty of the Bride of Christ ? The times of which we write were times of trouble, and of anguish and rebuke for England. Love had waxed cold, and faith was well nigh dead. The horrors of a civil war were at their height, and its evil effects had penetrated into the recesses of cloister and cathedral. The Bishops at this time were but a sorry example to the rest of the Clergy ; they had mixed themselves up in the quarrels and interests of the State ; they seem to have forgotten that their weapons were not the sword and spear, but prayer and fasting, and thus many of them with their fortified castles, and numerous retainers, presented the appearance rather of worldly and rapacious Barons, than of meek servants and soldiers of the

Cross. In such a state of things as this, gladly would those few, who beheld with awe and amazement the corruptions of the Church, and whose hearts were well nigh bursting with holy indignation at what was going on, seek counsel and support of such an one as St. Bernard, who in this way became acquainted with the state of the Church, and the affairs of almost every diocese in Europe.

With regard to the affairs of York, it is more than probable that St. Bernard had direct and constant information, and this from two sources. It has already been mentioned, that Robert Bisech, Prior of Hexham, being fully persuaded of the truth of the charges brought against William personally, and being unwilling to remain under the jurisdiction of one whom he considered guilty of simony, gave up his house, and retired as a monk to Clairvaux. Here then was a direct channel of information for St. Bernard, who of course would only hear one side of the question, and that the very worst. But in addition to this, the Abbeys of Rievaulx and Fountains were both under the jurisdiction of Clairvaux, and were of the Cistercian order, and therefore in constant communication with their parent Society : we have seen above that the Abbots of both these houses had appeared at Rome against St. William in 1143, and in that same year, probably as he was returning home, Richard, the Abbot of Fountains, died at Clairvaux : upon which St. Bernard immediately convened the Chapter to deliberate as to whom they should appoint as his successor : their choice fell upon Henry Murdach,<sup>2</sup> then Abbot of Vau-

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale Monast. Angl. vol. v. p. 286. Cart. ad Fontanense Cænobium in agro Ebor. fundatum, A. D. 1132. Num. xxvii.

clair, who, as we have already mentioned, had been induced by St. Bernard, when young, to enter upon a religious and contemplative life, and had joined the brotherhood of Clairvaux. Henry, being a person of very great sanctity, was entrusted by St. Bernard with full power to conduct the regulation and visitation of the monastery, which he appears to have done in a most exemplary manner.<sup>3</sup> This then would be another source from which St. Bernard would gain information as to what was going on at York : the course of our history will show us what opinion St. Bernard had of William in consequence, and what use he made of the information he received.

Celestine II. had no sooner ascended the Apostolic Chair, than St. Bernard determined to oppose to the uttermost what he believed to be a case of gross irregularity, and if so, of very great injury to the Church at large, addressed the Pope in terms of no common warmth and earnestness. Wholly bent as he was in thoroughly purging the Church of abuses, and of raising amongst the Clergy a higher tone both of life and feeling, this was precisely the case in which he would use all his energies and endeavours ; and being persuaded of the uncanonical character of the election, and also of the personal unfitness (as he supposed) of the Archbishop for the charge, as the mere tool of a monarch who wished to create a party in a Church where he was unpopular, he was determined to get him deposed, and towards this end, he applied at once to the Court of Rome.

<sup>3</sup> “ Henricum de Valle clare Abbatem ad Anglicanas partes transmisit, vices suas tam in ordinatione quam in exequenda visitatione, illi committens.”—St. Bern. Ep. 106, also 320 and 321. Op. ed Mabillon.

It will be remembered, that the conditions on which Innocent II. had given his sanction for William's consecration, were, that the Dean of York should swear that the mandate from the king had not superseded, or interfered with the election of the Chapter : he also granted that, in case it was necessary, three fit persons might swear instead of the Dean ; which we have seen was done at the Council at Winchester, which the Dean was not able to attend, on account of the disturbances of William Comyn. We have no means of discovering for certainty whether the Dean, had he been able to have attended the Council, would have taken the oath, or not : but assuming as we do, that William himself knew nothing about the king's mandate, the English synod, as far as we can see, were perfectly justified in considering both his election and consecration valid, after the oath had been taken by a Bishop and two Abbots as proxies for the Dean. St. Bernard however considered this a plain proof that the Dean *could* not take the oath, and also that William knew this, and had himself connived at the arrangement ; and this, together with the fact that his information came from those who, from whatever cause, were professed enemies of William, will account for the very strong terms in which he expresses himself. But before we proceed to the letters of St. Bernard, it may not be amiss to mention a strong argument in favour of William's personal character, and this is the testimony of the monks of Fountains, who, as we shall see hereafter, suffered much from William's appointment, and who therefore must have been impartial in their opinion. They say in one of their documents belonging to the monastery, that William "was a man of high birth, adorned with many virtues, and in all respects worthy

to preside over a cathedral, *if his election had been more canonical.*"<sup>4</sup> Here then there is not a word against him *personally*, but only against the way in which his election was conducted.

Let us now return to St. Bernard. In his first letter to Celestine,<sup>5</sup> he calls upon him to carry out and fulfil the intentions of his predecessor, and tells him that here was a good opportunity for so doing. He declares that the case of the Archbishop of York had been decided by Pope Innocent, and yet that his sentence had not been carried into effect. For though the Archbishop had been accused on various grounds, yet that the whole controversy was allowed to rest upon one point which was to be decided by the Dean, and he implies that this was at the request of the accused himself. And yet, he continues, what has been the issue? The Dean would not swear, and yet William is Bishop. He then inveighs against him as "one whose character was low, ill spoken of, one accused by public fame, who had not been cleared of the charges, but rather convicted." He concludes by demanding of the Pope whether his Suffragan Bishops and the rest of the Clergy were to receive the Sacraments from, and pay obedience to such a man, "to one who had been twice thrust into the sanctuary, once by the King, and once by the Legate, and who not being able to enter in by the door, had dug an entrance, as the saying is, by a silver spade, through which he had impudently thrust himself."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Dugdale Monast. Angl. vol. v. p. 300. Cart. Num. xxvi.

<sup>5</sup> S. Bern. Ep. 235.

<sup>6</sup> "Turpis infamisque persona: publice infamatus nec purgatus, imo et convictus.....Fodit argenteo, ut aiunt, sarculo, unde impudenter intrusit."—Ep. 236.

In no less strong terms is the letter to the Bishops and Cardinals of the Roman Court. And in this letter St. Bernard mentions certain letters which William said he had received from the Pope, but of which St. Bernard says, "Would they had been from the prince of darkness, not from the Prince of the Apostles !"<sup>7</sup>

It is probable that this was the letter giving permission to the Dean to have proxies in case he could not attend to take the oath himself : and we may here observe, that the reason the Pope gave the decision he did respecting the oath, was not that those who supported the election denied that the Earl of York had come to the Chapter and recommended William for the vacant see. They did not deny this, but only that he had absolutely commanded the election, as if the king had supreme power in such cases. But after all we cannot arrive at any certainty upon the question ; all that we would maintain is this, that William was to all appearances innocent of the charges laid against him, but that his election might have been, indeed probably was, uncanonical. Doubtless St. Bernard supposed he had good grounds for opposing him, and we shall only be following the opinion of Pope Benedict XIV., to whom we shall again refer presently, if we say that, as far as William's personal character was concerned, St. Bernard was mistaken.

Knowing however what we do of St. Bernard, and of his immense influence, we cannot be surprised that his opposition was not without its effect upon the Pope. William, after his consecration, petitioned Celestine

<sup>7</sup> " Utinam a principibus tenebrarum, non a principibus Apostolorum."



in the accustomed way for the Pallium,<sup>8</sup> without which he could not exercise the full powers of his office : his opponents however at Rome brought forward many charges against him, and his request was denied : he was commanded to appear in person before the Pope, and to answer for himself.<sup>9</sup> But in the meantime Celestine died, on the eighth of March, 1144, and on the twelfth of the same month, Lucius A. D.  
1144.

II. was consecrated as his successor : he is described as not being of such an austere disposition as the former Pope. Immediately on his appointment, the Bishop of Winchester petitioned him in favour of his nephew William, and was successful : he met with favour and assistance from Lucius, but not so far as to retain the office of Legate which he had hitherto held. This office was now given to Hicmar (or Ymar), Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum, who had been chosen from the monastery at Cluny, and admitted into the Apostolic college by Pope Innocent II. He was now sent to England as Legate, and bearer of the Pallium for the Archbishop of York. It was on this occasion that William's easy,<sup>1</sup> and, as it would seem, dilatory disposition, of which we spoke at the beginning of our history, proved greatly injurious to his own welfare : for through negligence he failed to meet the Legate, at the time and place appointed ; occupied perhaps in some trivial and unimportant business compared with the duty of meeting the Pope's messenger and receiving from him what, in those days, was an indispensable badge of his office : it seems, however, pro-

<sup>8</sup> Gul. Neubrig. Lib. i. c. xvii. " Responsales idoneos, pro petendo solemniter Pallio ad Sedem Apostolicam direxisset."

<sup>9</sup> John Hagust. p. 273.

<sup>1</sup> John Hagust. p. 274.

bable that Hicmar would not at once have conferred the Pallium, for St. Bernard<sup>2</sup> had written to William, Abbot of Rievaulx, at the same time that Hicmar was sent to England, telling him that he had used every possible means to get the Archbishop deposed, and that he had suggested to the Legate not to deliver the Pallium, unless the Dean of York would himself take the oath. Be this as it may, so it was, that whilst William was delaying, his friend and patron Lucius died, February 25th, 1145, and was succeeded by the friend and disciple of St. Bernard, Eugenius III. The tide had now again turned against William : the Legate was forbidden to confer the Pallium : heavier trials now await him ; his opponents were greatly strengthened by the succession of the new Pontiff, and as we shall see, gained their end, and were for the time successful.

A. D.  
1145.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *St. William deposed.*

POPE Lucius, as we have seen, died on the 25th of February, 1145, and on the 24th of the following month, Bernard of Pisa, Abbot of the monastery of St. Anastasius, at Rome, was consecrated as his successor, under the title of Eugenius III. The circumstances of his election are too curious to be omitted. He was a monk of Clairvaux, and had been sent five years before by St. Bernard, to

A. D.  
1145.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 360.

found the monastery just mentioned. Even this office seemed far too much for him, for he was a man of inferior abilities, and of no education : his duties at Clairvaux had been “to take care of the stove, and to make a fire for the monks, who from being but thinly clad, were generally pierced with cold after the matin service.”<sup>3</sup> Whilst Abbot at Rome, he encountered great difficulties and vexations from the slander and calumnies of a false brother ; so much so, that he entreated St. Bernard to allow him to return to Clairvaux, “for that he was in danger of becoming the laughing-stock of the whole city.”<sup>4</sup> It was this weak and humble monk, who belonging neither to the episcopal order, or to the college of Cardinals, and who was unequal to manage a small monastery, that found himself chosen to be the head of the whole Church. And in him were verified most fully the words of St. Paul, that God had chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong, for Eugenius after his election became quite another person, so that every one was astonished at his wisdom and the firmness of his conduct. This will account for the great influence which St. Bernard had over Eugenius, and for the unwillingness the latter displayed to go against the wishes and advice of such a counsellor.

At this time the Cistercian order began to increase in power and influence,<sup>5</sup> and especially under the Pontificate of Eugenius, who himself was, as we have seen, the disciple of St. Bernard ; and it seems probable that this, among other circumstances, gave a unity of

<sup>3</sup> Ann. Cist. p. 393, n. 10. Vie. de St. Bern. par Ratisbonne, vol. ii. pp. 59, 60.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 343, 344, inter Ep. S. Bern. ed. Mabillon.

<sup>5</sup> Gervasii Chronicon. ap Twysden, p. 1361.

purpose to the proceedings which were now to be taken against William. We may also here remark in passing, that the Cistercians, with St. Bernard at their head, were the great reformers of the day ; that is, they had both attempted, and with success too, to restore their order to its ancient system of strictness and discipline, and were now endeavouring to do the same for the Church at large. Their life was one continued protest against abuses and lax practices, which then so sullied the beauty of the Church, and of these, the one against which they lifted up their voice incessantly, was simony. This was the crime which, notwithstanding the saintly opposition which the great Gregory VII. had made against it, was still disgracing the Church of Christ. How to overcome it, was still one of the most anxious and interesting questions to all those who had the Church's welfare at heart, and to none was it more full of anxiety and care, than to St. Bernard. Hence then his determined opposition to William, hence his expressions of indignation and disgust ; for it must be allowed that however free from the taunts of this crying sin William might have been, still he was in the eyes of such as St. Bernard, the representative of the simoniacal party. He was mixed up with its supporters ; his friends, alas ! and patrons, were confessedly on the side of the world, and he himself had yet to learn, " that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." But to return. William's opponents soon perceived that there would be little difficulty in gaining the Pope over to their side ; and therefore, no sooner was Eugenius elected, than the case of the Archbishop was brought before him. Henry Murdach now appears

foremost in opposing him :<sup>6</sup> he was doubtless well acquainted with Eugenius, and on the strength of this, he urged his complaints against William with great confidence : Their first step was to prevail on the Pope to recall the Legate Hicmar, and to forbid his giving the Pallium to William.

In 1146, William beginning, as we may suppose, to realize the disadvantages of his position, determined to petition the Pope in person for A. D.  
1146. the Pallium, and for that purpose went to Rome. Here he found the Roman Senate in favour of his cause ; but this was as nothing while he had St. Bernard still against him, who hearing that he was at Rome, wrote at once to Eugenius in terms of far greater indignation and vehemence than those which he had used to Celestine.<sup>7</sup> Eugenius was perplexed ; he dreaded, and well he might, to go against St. Bernard, and yet as it would seem, it did not appear clear to him, how to carry out into effect the wishes of his adviser. St. Bernard on the other hand declared that though importunate, he yet had a fair excuse ; he complains that all the world was taking him for Pope, and every one consulting him on their own affairs. The righteousness of the cause he now has in hand excuses his importunity. His pen was again directed against that idol of York “*idolum Eboracense*,” and this from necessity, for he had often aimed at it with the same weapon, but had not yet cast it down. He tells the Pope that he alone had the power of deposing a Bishop, and that he alone would be to blame if this crime which must be punished is not so, and that too

<sup>6</sup> “*Plurimum præsumens sibi de gratiâ Apostolici.*”

<sup>7</sup> Ep. 238, 239.

with the severity it deserves. He leaves it to his own conscience to decide, with what violence the offence of him of York should be not struck down so much, as blasted, as it were, with lightning ;<sup>8</sup> he tells him that the reason it had not been done so before, was that he might have the doing of it, that the Church of God over which he presided by Divine authority might see in this case the fervour of his zeal, and the power and wisdom of his soul, and that all the people might fear the Priest of the Lord when they heard that the wisdom of God was with him for executing judgment.

How could Eugenius resist such arguments as these, coming as they did from one to whom he had so lately been in the habit of paying the most unquestioning obedience ? Supreme though he was, and responsible to no man, he had not forgotten the ties which bound him to St. Bernard ; now more than ever would he seek from him support and counsel. In the present instance St. Bernard was decided—he was rarely mistaken—how could he oppose such an one ? No—he was in a great strait, and dreading on the one hand to neglect St. Bernard's counsel, and being unwilling on the other to go counter to the wishes and opinions of the Roman College, he took as it were a middle course, and decreed that until the Dean of York, now Bishop of Durham, should himself take the oath required of him by Pope Innocent, William must cease to exercise the office of Bishop. This was the answer he sent to St. Bernard, and at the same time he wrote to the Bishop of Durham, adjuring him to declare the truth openly and without reserve. The Bishop now seems to have given his opinion against the Arch-

<sup>8</sup> “ Non dico ferienda, sed fulminanda.”

bishop's election, and to have acknowledged that it was uncanonical : and we cannot but wonder at the course he had taken : by his duplicity he had allowed three persons to swear to what they could not but believe was true, he the while being conscious of the contrary : he had openly professed regard for William, who, as we have seen, was present when he was enthroned, and now, to suit his own purposes, he found it convenient to declare all he knew about the matter : but why not have done so at once ? to what profit was this duplicity and unfairness ? no words of ours are necessary to expose this unprincipled proceeding, the facts themselves are quite sufficient to convict the Bishop of most unchristian and unmanly conduct. St. Bernard, depending on this declaration, and as was reasonable, more anxious than ever to see the irregularity corrected, addressed a second letter to Eugenius,<sup>9</sup> and demands how much longer the land was to be burdened, and the fruit choked up by this useless branch ? the time was come for its amputation ; for the very man on whom it trusted, had declared that it must not be pruned but cut away.<sup>1</sup> He says that letters<sup>2</sup> from the Bishop of Durham to the Pope's Legate were in existence, in which the fact of intrusion is plainly avowed, and the election denied. And thus his defender, as he supposed, has turned out to be his accuser. It was not his part (St. Bernard's) to dictate in what way (for there seemed to be more ways than one), the offender must be deposed. It matters little when the unfruitful tree falls, if only, it doth fall. As to what

<sup>9</sup> Ep. 240.

<sup>1</sup> “ Non purgatione, sed amputatione opus esse.”

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that the letters were written at the time that Hicmar was in England.

he says (William) about his own private letters respecting the oath, it is either true or false : if true, then the Pope was the guilty person : but God forbid that such duplicity as this be imputed to so great a man : “for Innocent,” continues St. Bernard, “was of that character, that if he were able now to answer for himself, he would say, ‘Openly did I give my sentence against thee, and in secret have I spoken nothing.’”

But whatever be the truth of the matter, for it is impossible to come to any *exact* knowledge of the real state of the question, St. Bernard, as was likely, prevailed ; and William perceiving at length that his cause was hopeless, and that both his letters which he said he had received from Pope Innocent were accused of being counterfeit, and also that the Bishop of Durham, whom he had supposed was his friend, had now deserted him, if not betrayed him, finding all his endeavours useless, left Rome, and retired to Sicily ;<sup>3</sup> Roger the king of that island being his kinsman. Here he stayed for some time with one Robert, an Englishman of Salisbury, the king’s Chancellor : afterwards he returned to England ; but we must here leave him for a while, to follow up the events which took place both in England and France after the Pope’s decision respecting him.

The news of the Pope’s decision respecting the Archbishop had no sooner arrived in England, than the greatest indignation and confusion prevailed at York and in the neighbourhood.<sup>4</sup> The king’s party were of course offended beyond measure, and the supporters of Mathilda, who had hitherto strained every nerve for

<sup>3</sup> John Hagust. p. 275.

<sup>4</sup> Godwin de Præsulibus, vol. ii. p. 250. Ed. fol.



the deposition of William, were now exulting in all the joy of having gained their point. Their exultation only increased the rage of their opponents ; at length the King's adherents, and amongst them some of William's own kinsmen, being no longer able to contain their indignation, formed a conspiracy against Henry Murdach, whom they considered to have been the chief cause of the Archbishop's disgrace.<sup>5</sup> They attacked the Abbey of Fountains in a large body, with drawn swords, which they hoped to bedew in the blood of the Holy Abbot. Their rage had so passed all control, that they feared not to profane the sacred Abbey itself :<sup>6</sup> with impious and sacrilegious hands they tore down the gates, and entered the very Sanctuary : but when he, for whose blood they thirsted, was not to be found, they rushed through the adjacent buildings and offices, laying every thing waste, and carrying off whatever was valuable ; and to finish their work of impiety, they set fire to the building, erected at so much labour and expense, and soon reduced it to a mass of ashes. At a short distance off stood the holy brotherhood, and beheld in dismay and anguish their house and Church crumbling and sinking into ashes before the devouring flames. One little oratory, with its adjacent offices, remained to them not quite consumed, like a brand snatched from the fire. Here at the foot of the altar lay prostrate the Abbot, pouring forth in prayer his soul to God. His prayers were heard, for here, while the hand of the destroyer was at work, he lay unseen, unhurt, " safe under the defence of the Most High, and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty." The de-

<sup>5</sup> Dugdale Monast. Angl. vol. v. p. 286. Cart. Num. xxxvi.

<sup>6</sup> John Hagust. ubi sup.

stroyers supposing that he was not at Fountains, at length departed, "laden," as the monkish writer says, "not with much money, but with much damnation."<sup>7</sup> They lived not long to rejoice in their impious deed : they were struck with the hand of God, and were cut off almost immediately in their sins, some of them dying of consumption, some by drowning, and some were struck with madness ; all of them in a short time perished in various ways, and almost all unreconciled to God." Meanwhile the Abbot and Monks, taking courage and comfort from above, set themselves vigorously to work to rebuild the Abbey and Monastery, and as it is written, "the bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones,"<sup>8</sup> so was it with the Abbey of Fountains : holy and faithful men of the neighbourhood gave their assistance, and in a short time the new fabric rose more beautiful, and glorious than the former.

This shameful proceeding gave the finishing stroke, as it were, to William's case : an account of it was straightway sent to Rome, and though the Archbishop was in no way concerned in it,<sup>9</sup> we cannot be surprised that the Pope should suppose he was, and consequently that he was now determined to punish him with the greatest severity ; and for this purpose he endeavoured, but without success, to seize him.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1147, which, according to the French and English reckoning of those times, A. D.  
1147-8. was still current, Easter falling on the eleventh of April, but according to our present calculation, in the beginning of 1148, Eugenius left Rome,

<sup>7</sup> "Parum quidem pecuniæ sed plurimum damnationis."

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah ix. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Gul. Neubrig, Lib. 1, c. xvii.

<sup>1</sup> John Hagust. ubi sup. ; see also Ep. 252, St. Bern.

and came into France for the purpose of presiding at a council of the Gallican and Anglican Bishops. The prelates of both countries were commanded to appear, and in the middle of Lent, Eugenius held the great Council of Rheims.<sup>2</sup> We may here mention a fact connected with this Council, which will illustrate the party spirit which was at that time existing in England, even between one Bishop, and another. Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, had received the Pope's command to attend the Council, and had accordingly asked, but could not obtain the king's permission to go. Inasmuch however as he feared God more than the king, he started, and with very great difficulty arrived in France. For in order to prevent his departure, the king had ordered all the sea ports to be narrowly watched, and guarded. This was done at the suggestion of Henry, the Bishop of Winchester, who for some time previously to this had been on bad terms with the Archbishop. The origin of the ill will between them seems to have arisen from Henry's disappointment at not having been promoted to the See of Canterbury, which, says the Canterbury historian, he fully expected.<sup>3</sup> They then had disputes concerning the rights and privileges of their respective offices and jurisdiction. The Archbishop accused Henry of abusing his power as Legate, and had petitioned Pope Celestine to remove him from his office.<sup>4</sup> On the present occasion, Henry had so contrived, that if the Archbishop, left the country, he should be proscribed by the king, whereas if he did not attend the

<sup>2</sup> Gervasii Chronicon, p. 1363.

<sup>3</sup> Gervasii Chronicon an. 1138. p. 1348.

<sup>4</sup> Vid. Gervasii Act. Pontif. Cantuar. p. 1665, et Step. Bir-chington vitæ Archiep. Cantuar. Anglia Sacra, pars i. p. 7.

Council he would be suspended, if not deposed, for contempt of the Pope. Theobald however found means to embark, and in a small shattered bark reached, after great danger, the French shore, and made his appearance at the Council. The Pope received him with great joy and honour, and commended him for his zealous and fearless conduct. On his return from France, Stephen sentenced him to banishment: for which the whole kingdom was put under an interdict by command of the Pope.<sup>5</sup> There were present also at the Council those of the Clergy of York, who were opposed to William, together with Henry Murdach. They again layed their complaints before the Pope, and declared that William had not been canonically elected, or lawfully consecrated, but had been thrust in by the king's authority, "*auctoritate regia intrusum.*" Whereupon Alberic, Bishop of Ostia, pronounced the sentence of the Pope in the following words,<sup>6</sup> "We decree by the authority of the Pope, that William, Archbishop of York, be deposed from the Pontificate, because Stephen, king of England, nominated him before the canonical election had taken place." We may here remark, that here for the first time the legality of his consecration came into question, and the probable reason for its not being considered legal, was, the non consent of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which was mentioned above.

The See of York was now again vacant, and Eugenius immediately addressed letters to the Bishop of Durham and the Chapter of York, commanding them

<sup>5</sup> Vid. *Chronica*. W. Thorn. A. D. 1148. ap Twysden, p. 1807. et Gervasius p. 1363.

<sup>6</sup> Gervasius ubi sup.

within forty days after the receipt of the letters, to elect in the room of William, a learned, discreet, and religious person. In obedience to this command, the superior clergy of the Cathedral and Diocese of York met on the eve of the festival of St. James the Apostle, in the Church of St. Martin, in the suburb of Richmond,<sup>7</sup> to choose a fit person to fill the vacant See ; after much deliberation the majority chose Hylarius, Bishop of Chichester ; the rest of the Chapter, Henry Murdach, Abbot of Fountains.<sup>8</sup> The issue of their meeting was reported to Eugenius, in the ensuing winter, when he confirmed the election of Henry Murdach, and consecrated him with his own hands at Treves, on the second Sunday in Advent, in the Octave of St. Andrew. Henry, now Archbishop, and duly invested with the Pallium, set out on his journey for England, little imagining the kind of reception that awaited him.<sup>9</sup> William had been dearly beloved by the common people of York, and, as we think, deservedly so, for his exceeding benevolence to them, and for the holiness of his life, and now they could ill endure the presence of one whom they knew had been one of the main instruments in getting him deposed. They were not likely to enter into questions about the legality of his election ; all they knew or cared for was, that William had been a good Archbishop and friend to them, and now he was taken away from them, and, as they supposed, on unjust grounds, and another, one of his very enemies, sent to them, in his stead : this was more

<sup>7</sup> “ In suburbium de Richemund.”

<sup>8</sup> Gervasius ubi sup. John Hagust. p. 276. Dugdale. Monast. Angl. vol. v. p. 286. cart. num. xxxvii.

<sup>9</sup> Godwin de Præsul. Angl. vol. ii. p. 250. fol. ed.

than they could endure, and so, swayed entirely by their feelings, they set themselves at once with all their might against the new Archbishop, and having laid their plans, they prevented his entrance into York. Stephen too was highly indignant at the treatment of his nephew, and by way of revenge required Henry to take some unusual oath, which he refused to do : consequently the king's party was added to his opponents. The citizens remained firm, and drove him from the city : and the greatest confusion now prevailed. The Archbishop anathematized the insurgents,<sup>1</sup> and laid them under an interdict. The Cathedral was closed, the sacred rites discontinued, and the insurrection spread through the whole province, but especially in the city, where things arrived at such a pitch, that an Archdeacon,<sup>2</sup> a friend of the Archbishop's, was murdered. Meanwhile Henry retired to Ripon, where he remained for several years, during the whole of which time the disturbances at York never ceased. The king's soldiers were continually persecuting those who had any share in William's deposition.<sup>3</sup> Eustace, king Stephen's son, hearing that the services of the Church were discontinued, appeared at York at the head of a body of troops, and commanded the Clergy, in spite of the Archbishop's anathema, to resume them, and perform them in the accustomed manner ; and he severely punished the people of Beverley for having received and afforded protection to the Archbishop.

Thus, instead of the peaceful quiet and repose of

<sup>1</sup> John Hagust. p. 277. Godwin ubi sup.

<sup>2</sup> Godwin. p. 251.

<sup>3</sup> John Hagust. p. 278. et Gul. Neub. lib. i. c. xvii.

Fountains, Henry for the first three years of his Episcopate met with nothing but difficulties and vexations. The displeasure of his sovereign, the perplexity and distraction of the few that still remained faithful to him, the hatred of his citizens, and the continual plottings and conspiracies of his adversaries, were but a sorry exchange for a life of prayer and contemplation, for the round of holy services, and the society of those who were as his own children in love and affection for him. It seems however that he repined not at what he acknowledged to be the will of God, but remaining quietly at Ripon, he at length was recompensed for all his sufferings ; the malice of his enemies gave way before his prudence, his meekness overcame their fury, and even the indignation and opposition of the king was at length compelled to yield to his forbearance and Christian patience. The circumstances we do not know : but so it was, strange as it may appear, that in 1151, the king was reconciled to him, and he was at last received by the people of York, and enthroned with great splendour in the Cathedral on the Festival of the Conversion of St. Paul.<sup>4</sup> The following Easter he celebrated with Pope Eugenius at Rome. He governed his diocese with great zeal and strictness, and was himself a bright example of purity and holiness of life. The first thing we find him doing, was to restore at his own expense the privileges attached to certain dignities, freedoms and immunities, belonging to the Cathedral of York,<sup>5</sup> which William had sold to defray the expenses of his continual journeys to Rome.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Dugdale ubi sup. Godwin ubi sup. John Hagust. p. 279.

<sup>5</sup> "Privilegia dignitatum, libertatum, immunitatum."

<sup>6</sup> John Hagust. ubi. sup.

This is a blemish in William's character, which we would only notice in such manner as it is becoming to speak of the imperfections of a Saint; we will not stop to dwell on it, but leaving the Archbishop Henry in the prudent and well ordered government of his diocese, we will return to William, now no longer surrounded with the pomp and splendour of the Episcopate, but clothed in the humble garb of a penitent, and wholly taken up with sorrowing for the failings of his past life, and doubtless amongst them, for that which we have just mentioned.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *St. William in penitence.*

WE have now arrived at the most interesting, as well as the most edifying part of William's history. Hitherto we have beheld him mixed up more or less with the world and with worldly ways; living in king's houses, and clothed in soft apparel, patronized by the rulers of the earth, but opposed by one of the chiefest of God's Saints: himself meanwhile endeavouring to retain the position to which he had been raised, kind indeed, and benevolent to the poor, courteous, and possessed of many amiable qualities, but yet wanting in the chief characteristics which separate the Saint from the mere ordinary, and if we may so say, the every-day religious man. Believing nevertheless, as we do, that William was really innocent of the *crimes* brought against him, and that he was what the world



would call a good amiable man, still all will allow, that what we have as yet seen of his character is not of that standard and value as would warrant us in believing that he shared the assembly of those glorious beings whose memories are cherished by the Church with so much love and veneration. As yet he has not given any sign of his future destiny : making the very most of him as we may, still those wonderful, unearthly, and saint-like qualities, which in technical language are called "heroic virtue," and which the Church requires as an indispensable requisite, before she decides whether one departed is to be venerated as a Saint, and which, in greater or less degrees, has always shone forth in the Saints of Holy Church, has not yet been seen in William. How then, it may be asked, did he become fit to be inscribed in the Church's Catalogue of Saints ? The answer to this question will best be given by continuing our account of him ; yet it may be briefly stated, that it was through the grace of penitence. He exchanged the golden mitre and the purple robe for the cowl and serge ; the bed of down, and tapestried chamber, for the pallet, and the dark and cold and lonely cell ; the sounds of joy and laughter, for the tears and groans of a broken and contrite heart. And thus, incomprehensible and visionary as it may seem to the mere man of sense, he prepared himself to be a meet recipient for that glorious crown that fadeth not away.

After having spent some time in Sicily, William returned to England, and at once gave evident proof that his mind was made up as to his future course and mode of life. His uncle, the Bishop of Winchester, still the man of the world, and therefore heedless of the Pope's decision respecting his nephew, received

him at Winchester, as though he were still Archbishop, with much pomp and splendour. He offered him one of his mansions, and commanded that all his own retainers and household should pay him the same deference as before ; but William at once perceived the impropriety of such a course, and moreover, was both unfit and unwilling to receive such attentions. He rejected all the offers of his uncle, and instead of a palace and many servants, instead of luxury and comfort, he chose out as his abode some manor belonging to his uncle, near the monastery of Winchester, where he resided, though most of his time was spent in the society of the monks, in which he took the greatest delight.<sup>7</sup> Here his life was exemplary : not a murmur or complaint ever escaped his lips ; nor was he ever heard to speak against his enemies, and from those who did speak against them he would always turn away : diligent beyond the rest of his companions, he was constantly employed in study and reading, and yet was instant and persevering in prayer. In short, to quote the words of an old historian, “ he wished to do penance for his past sins, and to extinguish by the abundance of his tears, the avenging punishment of future fire.”<sup>8</sup>

“ And thus,” to quote again another old writer,<sup>9</sup> “ was he wholly changed into another man.” How much does this last short sentence imply ! How do the words “ wholly changed ” reveal to us the part of his history now under review !—“ changed into another man,” and this by the grace of penitence, by the practice of true and heartfelt sorrow and contrition. The

<sup>7</sup> Vid. Wharton. *Anglia Sacra*. pars i. p. 300. et Harpsfeldii *Hist. Eccl. Angl.* p. 397.

<sup>8</sup> Bromton p. 1041.

<sup>9</sup> John Hagust. p. 276.

worldly man may laugh at this ; he indeed, had he been William's adviser, would have bade him lead a very different life ; he would have had him make the best of it ; he would have said, "eat, drink, and be merry." But, William, frail and imperfect as he was, had not so learned Christ. He felt and acknowledged that his disgrace was not sent him for nought ; he received it as the furnace of affliction in which he was to be tried, and purified of all earthly dross and alloy, and receiving it as such, he could not but come forth from it an altered man. He had not read in vain of her who had sinned greatly, but who loved much, and therefore was forgiven ; of her whose tears bedewed her Saviour's feet, and washed away a load of guilt. Now would the Holy Hymns, in which he had so often joined, perhaps without much thought, when the Church in solemn festival assembles to honour her memory, come vividly before him, and as he knelt before the altar of his God, would he pray that he might be cleansed as Mary Magdalene, and become a devoted follower of his Lord. And if in the severe and piercing examination of his past life, the thought perchance should come across him, that he too had denied his Saviour, yet would he recall to mind that wondrous look upon the fallen Apostle, that never-to-be-forgotten look which availed to call him, unmindful of his promises, and the deserter of his Lord, back to a faithful and devoted service, and made him fit to become the bearer of the keys of Heaven, the foundation of the Church, the shepherd of the sheep. Such thoughts as these, as they flashed before the contrite penitent, could not but kindle a cheering ray of hope that even yet he might become a true and faithful servant of the Cross, and so he fainted not ; for five long years he

continued at the peaceful monastery, steadfast in the exercise of penance ; constant and unwearied in prayers, and fastings, and nightly vigils, in the holy round of fast and festival, and sacred seasons, hoping for nothing and desiring nothing, but the forgiveness of his past sins, and grace to serve his Lord faithfully for the future. And thus in him, as in the holy David and the blessed St. Peter, and in the loving St. Mary Magdalene, and in the robber on the Cross, and in the multitude of those who from the penitent have risen to the Saint, do we behold the merciful provisions of the Gospel in the exceeding grace of penitence. High and unspeakable as are the privileges and blessings in store both here and hereafter, for those who have never sullied by wilful sin the purity of their baptismal robe, those on whose foreheads the holy angels still behold the wondrous sign in all its infant brightness, far beyond all comparison as is their condition while on earth, and glorious as will be their reward hereafter, yet we cannot too highly prize, or ever be too thankful for, the hope held out to penitents. The tears which gush from the really broken and contrite heart, unite in wonderful co-operation with the blood of the Holy Lamb, to wash, as we may say, once more the sinful soul ; and though we dare not presume on this precious means of grace, still the penitent may cheer himself as he passes on his mournful and rugged path, with the hope that if he but endure to the end, he may yet be permitted to join with the Church triumphant in their hymns of everlasting praise, with those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and have through much tribulation entered into the kingdom of God. That such was William's blessedness, we shall give the grounds for believing by and bye.

But it is now time for us to leave the reflections which William's penitential life at Winchester suggested, and to pass on to the remainder of his history. It was in the latter end of the year 1148 that St. William entered upon his life of penitence.

In the middle of 1153, into which year we A. D.  
1153. must now introduce the reader, events took place which brought him forth from his solitude, to appear once more on the scene of active life. Within a few months of each other, Pope Eugenius, St. Bernard, and Henry Murdach, departed this life.<sup>1</sup> The latter died at Beverley, and was buried in the Cathedral at York; in the words of one of the monks of Fountains, "They loved each other mutually in their lives, and in death they were not divided; leaders of the Lord's flock, pillars of the house of God, lights of the world."<sup>2</sup> In the room of Eugenius, one of the Cardinals who had been an earnest supporter of William when his cause was heard at Rome, was elected Pope, under the title of Anastasius IV. As soon as the intelligence of the death of Eugenius and St. Bernard had reached England, William's friends, considering that now that two of his chief opponents were no more, something might be done towards his restoration, urged upon him the duty of claiming his former position.<sup>3</sup> Yielding to their entreaties, he left Winchester, and went immediately to Rome, where he presented himself before his former patron, Anastasius, not complaining, or finding fault with the sentence passed upon him, but humbly

<sup>1</sup> Eugenius July 8, St. Bernard August 20, Henry Murdach October 14.—John Hagust. p. 282. (his history ends here.)

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale ubi sup. Cart. num. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Godwin, p. 231. Bromton. p. 1041.

imploring pity, and as we may suppose, requesting the Pope to take his case into consideration. While he was at Rome, messengers arrived from England, with the news of the death of the Archbishop of York.<sup>4</sup> These same messengers conducted William back at once to York, where on his arrival, he found that he had been elected again, by the majority, and the most worthy part of the Chapter ;<sup>5</sup> immediately upon his re-election, he returned, according to one historian,<sup>6</sup> to Rome, where he was honourably received by Hugh, who had just been consecrated Bishop of Durham, in the room of William de St. Barbara, on the Vigil of St. Thomas (December 20), and who greatly advanced his cause before the Pope and Cardinals. This writer relates that William arrived in Rome on the third day after Hugh's consecration. (Dec. 23) Another, and perhaps more trustworthy writer,<sup>7</sup> gives a different account, and says that the Bishop of Durham had left Rome before William's second arrival there, and while his cause was still pending. But however this may be, it is certain that Anastasius still maintained his favourable opinion of William, and was rejoiced to find that he had again been elected by the Chapter. He confirmed most gladly their election, and presented William with the Pallium, which, as we have seen, he had never yet obtained. The Pope and Cardinals treated him with the greatest kindness, commiserating his old age and adverse circumstances ;<sup>8</sup> one Cardinal especially, of the name of Gregory,<sup>9</sup> described as "a man of great ability

<sup>4</sup> Vid. Acta Ss. vita. S. Gul. Jun. viii. sec. 6. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Bromton. p. 1041.

<sup>6</sup> Gervasius p. 1375.

<sup>7</sup> Gul. Neub. lib. ii. cap. xxvi.

<sup>8</sup> "Miserante canos."

<sup>9</sup> As to who this Gregory was, vid. Acta ss. ubi sup.

and most profound acuteness," investigated his case with much interest. And now, restored to his former high position, and receiving from the Holy Pontiff the favour and protection of his blessing, William set out once more for England. He arrived at Winchester<sup>1</sup> on Holy Saturday (April 3, 1154), where, having celebrated the Easter Festival, he pursued his journey (April 13, "post Albas") and hastened to reach his own city.<sup>2</sup>

His journey from Rome to England is remarkable for the effect he produced upon the inhabitants of the places through which he passed; they were struck with the purity and heavenly character of his whole demeanour and conversation. The following anecdote, which is told of him when he arrived at Canterbury, will show that an opinion of his sanctity must have been growing up now for some time, and that it had spread far and wide, abroad as well as at home. In those days, when the blessed effects of penance and the discipline of the Church were acknowledged by all true Christians, men would be as it were on the lookout, to hear of or see those who had given themselves up to the practice of sincere repentance, as persons for whom the Lord had done great things, whom only to see was a great privilege, and a most sure means of self-improvement. Thus we may imagine the fame of William's life at Winchester had reached the ears of all earnest and religious men, and they naturally longed to see him, not as it would be in these days, to criticise or ridicule, or to pronounce him a wild enthusiast and fanatic, who knew not the spirit of the Gospel, but to gaze upon him with devotion and reverence,

<sup>1</sup> Bromton. p. 1041. Polydore Vergil lib. xii. p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Gervasius ubi sup.

if haply they might gain somewhat of his spirit, and receive from his holy lips words of comfort and encouragement. The world puts forward her heroes and men of science, her philosophers and politicians, and the children of the world, fall down before them, and pay them homage, and in like manner the Church has those amongst her children whose achievements surpass in measure infinite, those of hero or philosopher ; those who have wrestled against the unseen world, and have come forth victorious ; those who have found out the science of the heart and conscience, who can order and regulate the life of the hidden man, these are they, even the Saints in all ages, whom true believers long to see, in whose presence they joy to dwell, and with whom to hold communion after their earthly course is finished, is one of their greatest privileges and delights. This may serve to give importance to the otherwise ordinary story in question, that as soon as William arrived at Canterbury, Roger, the Archdeacon, who had been exceedingly desirous of seeing him, visited him, with feelings of the highest reverence and devotion, and on his taking his departure, William said, in the hearing of those who stood by, "That man will be my successor," which really came to pass.<sup>3</sup>

On leaving Canterbury, William, as we have already mentioned, passed a few days at Winchester, and thence proceeded straight to York, where he arrived on the Sunday before the Feast of the Ascension, May 8, 1154. There, however, a new sort of opposition awaited him. His old enemies were by God's grace indeed his friends ; they had opposed him in the days of his splendour, because a king had endeavoured to

<sup>3</sup> Stubbs. p. 1722. Bromton et. Gul. Neub.



force him upon the Church of Christ, and because he was identified with a secular party, headed by a worldly prelate, by whose means Theobald, the Primate of England, had become an exile. Now the scene had changed ; he had come back indeed with the rich robes which he had worn of old, but his heart and his treasure were now in heaven ; St. Bernard was there also ; but there remained on earth the other section of his opponents. None must be startled by their virulent and bitter hatred. The state of the higher secular clergy of the age was miserable ; an author of the time declares that the greater number of the bishops were mere military prelates ; one alone he mentions as a courageous assertor of the rights of the Church, the holy Bishop of Hereford.<sup>4</sup> This account will prepare us for the depravity of a portion of the Cathedral Clergy. The party in York who were still opposed to him, headed by Osbert, the Archdeacon, his old enemy, and by the Dean of the Cathedral,<sup>5</sup> endeavoured to prevent his entrance into the city, and appealed to the authorities of the Chapter against him. He proceeded, however, notwithstanding this attempted opposition, and was received with much solemnity and very great rejoicings, both by the Clergy and people. His opponents then attempted to gain their point by applying to Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who at this time held the office of Legate, but their attempts proved fruitless.

His entrance into York was marked by a very wonderful occurrence,<sup>6</sup> which tended in no small degree to

<sup>4</sup> *Gesta Stephani* ap. Duchesne *Hist. Norm. Script.*

<sup>5</sup> *Gul. Neub. ubi sup.*

<sup>6</sup> *Bromton*, p. 1041. *Stubbs*, p. 1722. *Polydore Vergil. ubi sup.*

exalt him in the eyes of the people, who were already devotedly attached to him. The whole city had come out to welcome the Archbishop, and as they returned, and William was preceding them, the impetuous multitude rushed headlong on to an old wooden bridge,<sup>7</sup> built over the river Ouse, which runs by the city of York, and over which they had to cross to get back again into the city. William, at the head of the crowd, had passed over the bridge, but as the people were upon it, the piers gave way, from the immense pressure, and the mass of the people, which consisted of a great number of women and children, were carried away into the stream. Fearful must have been the sight ; universal destruction seemed inevitable ; William was soon aware of what had taken place ; he stopped, and turning himself towards the river, made the sign of the Cross over the drowning multitude, and bursting into tears, he prayed fervently that Almighty God would not permit so many lives to be cut off on his account. His prayers were heard, for not a single soul perished.<sup>8</sup>

William entered York amidst the most rapturous rejoicings of the people, and began at once to look into the affairs of his diocese, which he governed with great moderation and mildness. One of the first things he did was to visit the Abbey of Fountains ; for he had promised at the command of the Pope, to make full restitution to the Abbey and its inmates for the injuries and losses they had received on

<sup>7</sup> Drake's *Antiq. of York*, b. ii. ch. i. p. 418.

<sup>8</sup> A chapel was built upon this bridge, dedicated to St. William, and which was standing until the Reformation.—Drake, *Book i. chap. vii. p. 235.*

his account,<sup>9</sup> and that he would take the place and its inhabitants under his especial pastoral superintendence, and would treat them with the most paternal affection. Doubtless he would have performed his promise faithfully, had time been allowed him. He went however to Fountains in great humility, and promised to make entire satisfaction to the brotherhood. He confirmed them in all the possessions with which his predecessors had endowed the Abbey, and having given to every one the kiss of peace, he returned for the last time to York, where, in a few days, he was removed suddenly from the world, and translated to regions of blissful peace and quiet. The account of his death is related with great simplicity by one of the old York chroniclers,<sup>1</sup> as follows : “ Shortly afterwards the Holy Prelate William prepared himself solemnly to celebrate the Feast of the Holy Trinity, that by the taking of the Heavenly Bread, he might offer himself as an acceptable service to the One God in Trinity (*uni et trino Deo.*) Having finished the mysteries of this great solemnity, he was suddenly seized with severe sickness : he returned to his palace, and gave orders that an abundant feast should be set before his guests. While they were feasting in great splendour, the Blessed Father retired to his chamber, and there foretold to his attendants by the spirit of prophecy the day of his decease. For eight days he continued worn out by a violent fever ; he permitted none but the hand of an heavenly physician to administer any remedies to him. On the ninth day of his illness, and the thirtieth from his arrival in York, on the 8th day of June, in the year

<sup>9</sup> Dugdale Monast. Angl. vol. v. p. 303. Cart. num. xlii.

<sup>1</sup> Stubbs, *ubi sup.*

1154, and the thirtieth year of King Stephen's reign, having bade farewell to his brethren, he finished his earthly life in his palace at York, about to receive from the Lord an eternal mansion : he was buried in the Church of St. Peter ; in which place most salutiferous oil flowed from his remains, by which Almighty God was pleased to work through his merits many miracles on the sick."

This is indeed the death of the righteous, which all would envy. It must not however be concealed that a mystery hung over the deathbed of St. William. A report at the time prevailed in England that he died by poison, put into the sacred chalice by his inveterate enemies.<sup>2</sup> The idea is most revolting, for though his gentle spirit passed away in peace, the notion that such wickedness should have been upon earth is very dreadful. At this distance of time when we look upon the evidence dispassionately, the report seems on the whole to have been false ; but in the first burst of grief after his death, it was generally believed ; the mention of it even occurs in one of the hymns which were sung in his honour. This proves at all events the idea which men had of the terrible rancour and wickedness of his enemies in the chapter. Even some of those who attended on his death-bed, as will appear, believed it so far as judicially to accuse Osbert the Archdeacon. A contemporary writer,<sup>3</sup> however, of great credit, exam-

<sup>2</sup> Hoveden, Script. post Bed. p. 490, says, "post perceptionem Eucharistiæ *infra ablutiones* liquore lethali extinctus est." This would imply not that he was poisoned in receiving the Blood of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist, but that poison was put into the water with which the Priest rinses the Sacred Chalice, and which he drinks.

<sup>3</sup> William of Newbridge, Lib. 2. c. 26.

ined thoroughly the whole affair, and his conclusion was that the report was false. He represents it as a mere conjecture, which nevertheless the common people, ever prone to terrible stories, soon spread abroad as an undoubted fact. Some time after St. William's death, when the report still prevailed, the writer above mentioned examined with solemn adjurations an old monk of Rievaulx, who had been on terms of great intimacy with the Canons of York, and also with the Archbishop himself. He was at this time of a great age, suffering from severe sickness, and very near his end : he solemnly declared that it was a mere false report, for that he was present himself at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and that it was quite impossible that any enemy could have had the opportunity of committing such a deed. He also declared that it was untrue that St. William, when his attendants supposed he had been poisoned, refused to take an antidote,<sup>4</sup> for he knew well from divine authority that God was not to be tempted. The same writer asserts that he heard one Symphorianus, a Cleric, who was St. William's constant companion, and who had waited on him with the greatest devotion during his illness, declare that at the persuasion of his friends, St. William took an antidote, and also that the chief reason why they supposed he had been poisoned was, that his teeth which were naturally very white, turned quite black during his last moments, but that the physicians laughed at such a notion, as it frequently happened with dying persons that their teeth turned black at the last. The only thing which weakens William of Newbridge's testimony is that there is a

<sup>4</sup> That he did refuse it is asserted by Alberic,—*Historiens de France*, vol. 13. p. 698.

letter from John of Salisbury<sup>5</sup> to Pope Alexander III., respecting the trial of Osbert the Archdeacon, for the murder of St. William, in which this same Symphorianus appears as the accuser. Osbert claiming to be tried in an ecclesiastical instead of a civil court, King Stephen refused to allow it. The case was delayed to the reign of Henry II., who with difficulty consented. On the day of the trial, as far as can be made out, Osbert failed to establish his innocence by compurgation, the ordinary mode of Inquest, that is, he could not muster a sufficient number of men to swear that they believed him innocent ; on which he appealed to Rome. What became of the cause we have not been able to discover, though perhaps some unpublished records may some day throw light upon it. On the point in question, however, it may be observed, that this account of Symphorianus does not contradict the facts which William of Newbridge professes to have heard from him ; it only proves that he drew a different conclusion from them. This agains strengthens William's testimony, for it shows that he took his premises from a person who was biassed the other way. On the whole, his unprejudiced opinion inclines us strongly to believe that the horrible crime existed only in imagination.

<sup>5</sup> V. Joann. Sarisb. Ep. 108, 110, 111, 122. inter Ep. Papæ Silvest. ii.

## CHAPTER V.

*St. William in the Calendar.*

WILLIAM'S death was deeply felt by the people of York. From first to last, in his prosperity and in his adversity, as Treasurer, as an exile from them, as their Bishop he had always been greatly beloved. He had been to them a father indeed, and sorely felt was their bereavement of one whom they fondly hoped might have been spared to them yet many years. The miraculous preservation of the people on his entrance into York, had produced amongst them a feeling of the deepest veneration, in addition to their pre-existing affection for him : they could not but feel that a supernatural power was with one whom they looked upon as the divine instrument of so wonderful a deliverance, and as time went on their devotion to him increased. The father to his son, the grandfather to his grandson, would tell the praises of their good Archbishop, and thus through the succeeding generation was he already really though not formally or ecclesiastically honoured as one who was sharing the company of the Saints in rest. At length in the year 1223, seventy years after his death, his fame had be-  
A. D.  
1223.  
come so great from the<sup>6</sup> miracles which were wrought at his tomb, that the Dean and Chapter of York petitioned Honorius III., who was then Pope,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Drake's *Antiq. of York*, B. ii. ch. ii. p. 481.

<sup>7</sup> *Breviarium Ebor.* 1493. In fest Trans S. Gul. Lectio 1.

that he might be canonized and honoured with the rest of the Saints of the Church. Witnesses were sent to Rome to be examined concerning the miracles, and as an instance of the great care which is taken by the Church in the process of canonization, we may remark that the accounts of the first set of witnesses were not considered sufficient,<sup>8</sup> and the Clergy of York were commanded to send fresh witnesses, and to make a second examination concerning the alleged miracles. How very solemn and awful a matter the Church considers the act of canonization to be, will appear from the Bull of Pope Honorius, from which we take the following extract. After a kind of general introduction it runs as follows :<sup>9</sup>

“ Our venerable brother the Archbishop, and our beloved children the Dean and Chapter of York, having petitioned in season and out of season that we should ascribe in the Catalogue of Saints in the Church Militant, William of sacred memory, whom we doubt not is greatly honoured by the Lord in the Church Triumphant,<sup>1</sup> inasmuch as it hath appeared by the testimony of many credible persons, that so greatly did the grace of his merits shine forth, that the Lord vouchsafed to work many miracles through him, and after his decease granted that many more should be wrought through his remains ; yet, although we believe the above testimonies, and by no means discredit the truth of his daily

<sup>8</sup> Benedict XIV. De Canoniz. Lib. ii. c. 49 ; also Raynaldi contin. ad Baron. an. 1223. Bull. Magn. an. 1222. Ep. 62.

<sup>9</sup> Bullarium Magnum Rom. A. D. 1226.

<sup>1</sup> Drake B. ii. ch. i. 419, mentions one Stephen Mauley, Archdeacon of Cleveland, as being instrumental in the canonization, but he is incorrect in the name of the Pope, whom he says was Nicholas, as also does the Rev. Alban Butler.



increasing celebrity, and would willingly grant the prayer of our petitioners, still forasmuch as in so sacred and divine a work, we could not proceed without much serious consideration, we have caused a diligent examination to be made several times by appointed persons, both into the life and also into the miracles of the above named Saint : for although in proof of the existence of sanctity, the perfection of charity is sufficient, yet for its public manifestation the declaration “exhibitio” of miracles must be required, and this because, some do their good works before men to be seen of them, and because the devil transforming himself into an Angel of light is continually deceiving men. Wherefore when the above mentioned examiners having conferred continually with credible witnesses on these points, and having examined them in the appointed manner, did fully, clearly, and faithfully relate unto us the course of this Saint’s most holy life, and also the many and great miracles by which the Lord after his decease caused him to be celebrated ; we, carefully considering that such a light was not to be hid under a bushel, but to be set upon a candlestick, since besides other miracles (which it would be too long to enumerate severally) his tomb was enriched with abundant oil,<sup>2</sup> with which many sick were anointed and healed of their infirmities ; and also, (which we must not pass over in silence), he had raised three persons from the dead, had given sight to five blind, one of whom having been conquered in a single combat, and condemned to lose his sight,<sup>3</sup> came to the tomb of the Saint and called upon him, and earnestly besought that his sight might be restored unto him, of

<sup>2</sup> “ Olei ubertate pinguescat.”

<sup>3</sup> “ In duello devictus et damnatus.”

which he knew he had been unjustly deprived,—we, in the presence and with the consent of our brethren, and other Prelates who were present at our Council, have ascribed, or rather commanded him to be ascribed in the Catalogue of Holy Confessors, decreeing that his Festival be yearly celebrated on the anniversary of his death.

“Wherefore that ye may prove yourselves grateful for such favour, as is fit, we exhort and warn you all, commanding you seriously by our Apostolic decrees, that ye keep the Festival and memory of this Saint with due veneration, and that ye ask for his prayers in faith to the Lord of Hosts, for yourselves, and other the faithful in Christ. We also confiding in the grace of God, and in the merits of the above named Saint, do mercifully grant unto all who shall devoutly assemble on his Festival in the Church of York, a relaxation for fifty days of the penance which may be imposed upon them.

*Dated at the Lateran, on the 18th of March, in the tenth year of our Pontificate. A. D. 1226.”*

Thus was St. William, after many trials and great reverses, at length solemnly inscribed in the Church's Calendar : and if it be asked how one, against whom so great a Saint as St. Bernard was opposed as a most determined enemy, was fit to be canonized and honoured by the faithful in Christ, we cannot do better than quote the words of Pope Benedict the fourteenth in answer to this question.<sup>4</sup> Having, in treating of the causes which may stand in the way of a person's repu-

<sup>4</sup> De Canoniz. Lib. i. ; cap. 41. sec. 13. “*De his quæ famæ sanctitatis obstare possunt.*”

tation of sanctity, brought forward by way of illustration the case of St. William, and having given shortly the account of his deposition, and restoration to the see of York, Pope Benedict continues in the following words : “ Wherefore if the above mentioned letters of St. Bernard could not prevent his (St. William’s) canonization, which neither prevented that of the writer, seeing he had favoured that which he considered to be a most righteous cause, deceived by the false insinuation of those, of the truth of whose opinion he had not the slightest doubt : on which account too he did not hesitate to affirm in his letters, that he had sometimes been deceived by the accounts of those in power :—it appears that we may conclude concerning the point in question, that it neither does, nor ought to stand in the way of any person’s sanctity, if charges are laid against him by any, (however important) writer or historian, so often as these charges shall be removed by a legitimate judge, by a formal sentence, or by that which is equivalent to such a sentence.”

And thus we cannot be charged with presumption if we follow Pope Benedict, and say that as far as regards the charge of simony or any other great crimes, we must think St. Bernard was misinformed respecting St. William. As to the character of the latter, before his life of penitence at Winchester, we have said already that there were many points in it which were far from being consistent with one who was hereafter to adorn the Church’s Calendar : but we may surely believe that whatever was earthly and of base alloy, was purified and cleansed by those contrite and heartfelt tears<sup>5</sup> which he shed as a penitent during his retreat at Win-

<sup>5</sup> Vid. Bromton.

chester, and his history cannot fail to teach us this great lesson, that true penitence is as it were a plank to the shipwrecked soul, to which if it do but cling in calm and steady faith, it may yet after much tribulation through many a storm and tempest, reach the haven of the heavenly land, and be permitted to dwell with those whose course had been through life free from the shoals and quicksands of wilful sin.

Our narrative now passes into the year 1283.

A custom had prevailed in the Church even before the time of Constantine, (and after him it was much more common) of translating the remains of those whom the Church honoured as Saints from the original place in which they had been buried, to some more important and conspicuous spot.<sup>6</sup> After the canonization of St. William, when miracles still continued to be wrought at his tomb, a great desire prevailed from time to time amongst the Clergy of York, to remove his remains, which at present were buried under a very plain, unsightly tomb, to some more prominent place in the Cathedral, and to build over them a shrine<sup>7</sup> which in its costliness and magnificence might in some degree correspond with the celebrity and glory of the Saint. It was not however until 1283 that this desire

A. D.  
1283.

<sup>6</sup> In Constantine's time the bodies of St. Andrew and St. Timothy were translated. Vid. Carmen xi. Paulini in Nat. S. Felix, Muratori Anecd. tom. 1. also, Du Fresne Constant. Christ. lib. iv. c. 5. also, Benedict xiv. De Canoniz. Lib. iv. c. xxii. et seq. "*de Translatione Corporum.*"

<sup>7</sup> This shrine was demolished at the Reformation. Drake in 1723 examined the spot which tradition said was the place of the Saint's grave : for the particulars of this examination, which seems to have been made with more of an antiquarian than devotional spirit, see his Antiquities of York, b. ii. ch. i. p. 420.

was carried into effect. William Wykwane was then Archbishop of York :<sup>8</sup> he had been elected in the summer of 1279, and consecrated on the nineteenth of September that same year, by Pope Nicholas III. at Rome. He, together with one Antony de Bek, the Bishop elect of Durham, were the chief promoters of the Translation, the whole expenses of which were defrayed solely by the latter.<sup>9</sup> Antony was not yet consecrated, and considering that greater solemnity would be added to his consecration if it could be performed on the same day as the Translation, and hoping thereby to connect himself more closely with St. William, it was arranged that both ceremonies should take place on the 9th of January. It was determined that the occasion should be marked by the greatest splendour and magnificence, and for this purpose, King Edward I. and his Queen Eleanor, together with all the Nobility and Chief Officers, ecclesiastical as well as civil, of the whole of England were invited to assist at the solemnity. Clergy from all parts were summoned, and eleven Bishops were present on the occasion. It was much feared that the King and Queen would not be able to attend, partly on account of the severity of the weather, but chiefly because the King and his Barons were especially occupied with the settling and disposing of Wales, which country had just been conquered. The King however was most anxious to be present, and an accident which happened to him a short time before his departure for York, increased his anxiety and made him quite determined to go there : "It happened," (we

<sup>8</sup> Stubbs, p. 1727.

<sup>9</sup> Vid. Brev. Ebor, 1493. Lectiones in Fest. Transl. S. Gul. Ebor. Archiep.

quote the words of the Lection used in the Office for the Festival of the Translation) "it happened that on a certain day he was mounting a steep place, and when he arrived on the summit, he fell down from an immense height, so that it was thought by his attendants, who were naturally amazed at what had happened, that his whole body must have been dashed to pieces. The King however rose up immediately, not in the least injured, and gave thanks to Almighty God and St. William, imputing his fall to the enemy of mankind, and his preservation to the merits of the glorious Confessor he had determined to honour. From that day so great a desire possessed him to honour St. William, that he set out quickly for York, and hastened in rapid journeys to reach the city."

It was now within two days of the time fixed for the Translation, and on the eve of the eighth of January, the Archbishop and Antony de Bek, attended by the Dean and Canons of the Cathedral, entered the Church in silence and late at night, to make preparations for the opening of the tomb; having chanted Litanies and poured forth many prayers for help and assistance, they prostrated themselves in much humility before the tomb, and after continuing some time in prayer, they commenced their work. Having removed a large stone which was placed upon the coffin, they found the body of the holy Bishop habited in the sacred vestments in which he had been buried. These were found to be, both by sight and touch, covered with oil which had exuded from his sacred remains.<sup>1</sup> Removing the Patten and Chalice which had

<sup>1</sup> Vid. S. Basil Hom. in S. Julittam Martyrem. t. 2. p. 35. S. Greg. Turon Lib. i. c. 30. De gloriâ Martyrum.

been placed next to the body in the tomb, the Archbishop and Antony de Bek, with others who were considered from their character fit for so sacred a work, beginning at the head, collected and rolled up the sacred relics with due reverence and devotion, and placed them in a small chest. They then carried it most devoutly on their shoulders to a secret place in the Cathedral, which they sealed, and leaving a guard there, they departed in silence. The next morning when it was quite light, they returned, and unlocked the chest, and having taken out the holy relics, handling them with the most minute reverence, they separated them from the ecclesiastical vestments, which they put by themselves, but the vestments belonging to the body itself, together with it they placed in a chest prepared with great care for the purpose. This they sealed and guarded. All was now ready for the completion of the Translation. Before however the hour for the ceremony had arrived, a remarkable event took place, which we will relate in the words of the Lection read on this Festival, and which is the fifth in order.<sup>2</sup> “On the following day, while the matins were being solemnly chanted for the Translation of St. William’s remains, in order that the solemnity might be rendered more remarkable, Almighty God magnified His Saint by a wonderful miracle. For as certain of the Canons’ servants who had come with their masters into the Cathedral were sleeping in the Choir, one of them had reclined his head on the foot of the pulpit from which the Gospel was wont to be read, and behold, during the reading of the third Lection, one of the columns of no small weight chanced to give way, and

<sup>2</sup> Brev. Ebor. ubi sup.

fell upon him, so that his head lay pressed down between the fallen pillar and the foot of the pulpit. When those who were present saw it, they ran to raise up the stone, supposing that his head was irremediably shattered. But he rose up, felt no injury, and loosing a band which was tied round his head, he found that it had been pierced through on either side by the upper and the lower stone, and was bitten through as it were with teeth, so that it was the more manifest to all that beheld it, that it was the work of Providence that when the band which enclosed his head had been so broken, he himself should have escaped unhurt. The servant gave thanks to Almighty God and St. William for his preservation, believing, and not without reason, that through his merits he had escaped so great a danger."

On the morning of the ninth of January, the Cathedral was filled with those who had thronged from all parts to be present at the Festival. The king and queen, and a very large attendance of lords and barons, together with the eleven Bishops and their clergy, increased the splendour and magnificence of the scene. The sermon having been preached by the Archbishop, the king himself and all the Bishops present, carried the chest which contained the sacred relics round part of the choir, with the greatest reverence and devotion, and thus the body of William was with great rejoicing and due solemnity translated from an obscure into a lofty place, from the common burying-ground into the choir.<sup>5</sup> As soon as the Office for the Translation was finished, the Archbishop solemnly consecrated Antony de Bek, Bishop of Durham, and thus ended the solemnities which doubtless for many gene-

<sup>5</sup> "Ab imo in altum, a communi loco, in Chorum."



rations were remembered as some of the most remarkable that had ever taken place in York.

Many miracles took place after the Translation, the most remarkable of which were told to the Clergy, and recorded, the account of them forming the remainder of the Lessons read on the Festival of the Translation. This was appointed to be kept yearly on the first Sunday after the Epiphany, St. William's day being celebrated on the 8th of June, the day on which he died. We cannot perhaps close our narrative in a better way than presenting the reader with the Collect which is used on the Festival of the Translation, and which clearly shows the thoughts and spirit which the Church wished should accompany such ceremonies, and which they were intended to produce in the minds of sincere and pious worshippers.

Almighty and merciful God, who hast shown the body of William, thy glorious Confessor and Bishop, which was buried in the depth of the earth, to be worthy of exaltation ; grant that we celebrating his Translation, may be translated from this valley of misery to Thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## APPENDIX I.

### *On the question of precedence between the Sees of Canterbury and York.*

ONE of the ancient chroniclers<sup>1</sup> relates that Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, would not give his consent to St. William's election ; but it does not appear whether this was owing to the circumstances of the election, or, which is the most likely, to the old feelings of jealousy, which had for so long a time existed between the two metropolitan sees of England. Though it would be beside our purpose to enter into the respective merits of the two sees, and to determine which was right and which was wrong, yet it may not be uninteresting to the reader to be put in possession of the state of the quarrel, as far as it had proceeded, up to the time of our narrative, which we will now do, having reserved it for a note. The old constitution, ordained by Gregory the Great, in the time of Paulinus, the first Archbishop of York, was, that the two sees should be counted of equal dignity, but that whichever Primate had been consecrated first, should take precedence of the other, preside at councils, &c., and in the case of the death of one, the survivor

<sup>1</sup> Gervasii act. Pontif. Cantuar. ap. Twysden, p. 1665.

should consecrate the successor, and in the interim, should exercise all the archiepiscopal functions within the province of the defunct. As instances of this, Honorius, fifth Archbishop of Canterbury,<sup>2</sup> was consecrated by Paulinus, Archbishop of York; and afterwards, Bosa, fourth primate of that see, was consecrated by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. This constitution of Pope Gregory continued until the time of the conquest, but when Lanfranc was appointed to the vacant see of Canterbury, by the Conqueror, and Thomas, a canon of Bayeux, to that of York, a contest for the supremacy arose between them, which lasted with unwearied vehemence between several of their successors. Lanfranc demanded of Thomas, as his undoubted and long-established right, profession of obedience. This, Thomas would by no means be induced to pay, upon which both Archbishops set out to Rome, to plead each one his cause before the Pontiff. The Pope referred them to a council of all the Bishops and Abbots of England, and upon their return, the subject was first discussed during the Easter Festival, before the king, in the royal chapel at Winchester, and afterwards at Windsor,<sup>3</sup> where, at a council held during Whitsuntide (1072), it was finally determined in the presence of the Legate of the Apostolic see, the king and queen, and of all the Bishops and Abbots of the kingdom :—

1. That the Church of York ought to be subject to that of Canterbury; and the Archbishop of York to pay obedience to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in all

<sup>2</sup> Stubbs *Act. Pontif. Ebor. ap.* Twysden, p. 1687.

<sup>3</sup> Wilkins *Concilia*, vol. i. p. 324.

things pertaining to Christian religion, as primate of all Britain.

2. That if the Archbishop of Canterbury called a Council wheresoever he pleased, the Archbishop of York with his suffragans ought to be present, and give obedience to what should be determined.

And 3. That the Archbishop of York ought to make profession of canonical obedience under an oath to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The oath however was dispensed with in the case of Thomas, through favour of the king ; to the above determinations Thomas submitted, and affixed his signature : it is said that they were carried owing to the king's partiality for Lanfranc, and that Thomas was under great disadvantages in arguing against his opponent, from not having the ancient charters and privileges of the see of York to refer to, for these had been destroyed in a fire just before his promotion to the see. Notwithstanding the decision of the Council of Windsor, the three succeeding Archbishops of York, Gerard, Thomas II., and Thurstan, refused to pay obedience to the Primate of Canterbury ; the two former yielded reluctantly after a time, but Thurstan stood out as long as he held the see, and never would consent to pay the required profession ; on the contrary, he felt so strongly about the matter, that he went to Rome and pleaded the cause of his see with such success before the Pope, that the Church of York again raised her head to an equality with her sister of Canterbury, and received back her ancient privileges. Honorius II. granted a Bull of exemption to Thurstan<sup>4</sup> and his suc-

<sup>4</sup> Wilkins ubi sup. p. 407. Eadmer Hist. Nov. lib. iv. See also Drake's Antiq. of York, B. ii. ch. i. p. 403, 413—417, and ch. iii.

cessors, by which he confirmed to the see of York its ancient dignity, and prohibited the Archbishop of Canterbury from exacting any profession of obedience from the see of York, or York from requiring the like from Canterbury ; he also confirmed the constitution of Gregory which we have mentioned above, and decreed that if the Archbishop of Canterbury would not gratis, and without exaction of obedience, consecrate the elect Archbishop of York, that then the said elect should be consecrated by his own suffragans, or else by the Roman Pontiff himself.

We may here observe that the confirmation of the election of a Bishop, by which is meant the approbation of his nomination, was in the early ages of the Church the right of the Metropolitan and his Suffragans.<sup>5</sup> Afterwards the right of approving and determining whether elections were canonical or not belonged to the Metropolitan only. This continued so for thirteen centuries, and the Decretals of Gregory IX., A. D. 1227, speak of it as the common law of the Church. Afterwards by the reservation of particular cases for the decision of the Apostolic See,<sup>6</sup> the old customs of canonical election were to a certain degree abolished, and the Metropolitan's right of confirming the elections of Bishops was taken away from him and reserved for the Pope :<sup>7</sup> the reason for this being that when the right of nominating and appointing Bishops belonged to the Pope alone, it seemed unfit that this nomination should be confirmed by one who was under his authority. All these altera-

<sup>5</sup> Vid. Concil. Nicen. Can. iv.

<sup>6</sup> Van Espen. vol. i. *De Confirm. Episcop.* Ferrarius Bibl. Prompt. Art. *Confirmatio*.

<sup>7</sup> Thomassin. P. 11. L. ii. c. 29, 30.

tions were after the time of the foregoing history, yet it seems probable that though not regularly sanctioned by a decree of the Church, new rules and customs were being gradually introduced with respect to the relative authority of the Pope and particular Metropolitans. Whether in the case of William, the Bishop of Winchester, used his Legatine authority beyond its just limits, or whether the Archbishop's consent was actually necessary, or how far so, we need not here enquire.

## APPENDIX II.

### *On the Pallium.*

It may be interesting to the reader to give a short account of the Pallium, of which we have heard in the foregoing history, and of the privileges annexed to its possession.

The Pallium is a part of the Pontifical dress worn only by the Pope, Archbishops, and Patriarchs.<sup>8</sup> It is a white woollen band of about three fingers breadth, made round, and worn over the shoulders, crossed in front, with one end of it hanging down over the breast, the other behind: it is ornamented with purple crosses, and fastened by three golden needles, or pins: It is made of the wool of perfectly white sheep, which are yearly on the festival of St. Agnes offered and blessed at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, in

<sup>8</sup> Bona de Reb. Liturg. i. 24.

the Church dedicated to her in the Nomentan Way in Rome. The sheep are received by two Canons of the Church of St. John Lateran, who deliver them into the charge of the Subdeacons of the Apostolic College, and they then are kept and fed by them until the time for shearing them arrives. The Palliums are always made of this wool, and when made, they are brought to the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, and are placed upon the Altar over their tomb, on the eve of their Festival, and are there left the whole night, and on the following day are delivered to the Subdeacons whose office it is to take charge of them. The Pope alone, *always* wears the Pallium, and wherever he officiates, to signify his supreme authority over all other particular Churches. Archbishops and Patriarchs receive it from him, and cannot wear it except in their own Churches, and only on certain great festivals, when they celebrate the Mass. This St. Gregory the Great declares to have been of very ancient origin.<sup>9</sup>

An Archbishop, although he be consecrated as Bishop and have taken possession, cannot, before he has petitioned for and received the Pallium,<sup>1</sup> either call himself Archbishop, or perform such acts as belong to the "Greater Jurisdiction," those, namely, which he exercises not as a Bishop, but as Archbishop, such as to summon a Council, or to visit his Province, &c. &c. He can however when his election has been confirmed, and before he receives the Pallium, depute his functions in the matter of ordaining Bishops, to his Suffragans, who may lawfully exercise them by his command. If however an Archbishop, before he receives the Pal-

<sup>9</sup> Lib. ii. Ep. 54.

<sup>1</sup> Ferrarius Bibl. Prompt, in art. *Pallium*.



lum, perform those offices which result immediately from the possession of it, such as for instance those relating to orders, and to the Chrism, &c. &c., the acts themselves are valid, but the Archbishop offends against the Canons and Laws of the Church.

The days on which Archbishops and Patriarchs may wear the Pallium, are, *Nativitas Domini*, Fest. *St. Joannis*, *St. Stephani*, *Circumcisio*, *Epiphania*, *Dom. Palmarum*, *Cœna Domini*, *Sab. Sanctum*, *Tres dies Resurrectionis*, *Ascens. Domini*, *Tres dies Pentecostes*, Fest. *S. Joannis Bapt.*, et *omn. Apostolorum*, *Quatuor Fest. B. M. V.*, *S. Michaelis*, *Omnium SS.*, *Dies Dedicationis Ecclesiæ*, *Consecrationis Episcoporum*, *Ordinationis Clericorum*, *Dies Anniversarius Ipsius Palliati*, atque *Festivitates principales suæ Cathedralis Ecclesiæ*.

## NOTES.

p. 17. Baronius relates St. William's case at length. His first account is, that St. William was fully guilty of the charges brought against him ; and then he retracts, and says nearly the same thing as Pope Benedict, that St. Bernard was mistaken, having been misinformed, &c. Pagi Critica in Baron. is very decided in favour of St. William ; and Pope Benedict XIV. says, " Anastasius IV. S. P. in sedem suam Ebor : restituit Willielmum et ad eum Pallium misit, *comperta ejus innocentia* ut Pagius narrat. tom. ii. breviarii Rom. Pontif. in vita prædict. Anast. IV. Luc. II. et Eugenius III. We may here observe that neither Baronius, Pagi, nor Pope Benedict, are correct in their details of the history.

p. 42. In the " Annales Wintoniensis Ecclesiæ ; auctore Monacho Winton. in Wharton's Anglia Sacra, pars i. p. 300, there is the following notice of St. William's exile, and of his life at Winchester.

A. D. 1147. Exulatus est Archiepiscopus Ebor. Willielmus ab Archiepiscopatu suo ; Henricus autam Wintoniensis Episcopus propter sanctitatem ejus, et quia eum ordinaverat et consecraverat, honorifice eum in domum suam suscepit cum suis, et necessaria sicut sibi et suis invenit. Ille autem, quantum potuit, et quantum passus est Henricus Episcopus, cum Monachis Wintoniensibus fuit, et illorum sanctitatem tanquam Angelorum dilexit, comedens et bibens cum illis, et in Dormitorio illorum dormiens.

A. D. 1154. Wms. Archiepiscop. Ebor. pacificatus suis, mediante Episcopo Henrico, cum reversus esset de exilio, veneno extinctus est, ut fertur ab Archidiacono suo, misso veneno in calice suo.

p. 42. The only mention that is made of St. William's penitence is by John of Hexham, and Bromton ; on whose short account we have ventured to ground and draw out this part of his history.

p. 55. Vid. Benedict XIV. de Canoniz. lib. i. cap. 39. " De differentiis inter Beatificationem et Canonizationem." St. William probably was honoured as *Beatus* in the Diocese of

York, soon after his death. His Canonization was binding on the whole Church, as Pope Benedict mentions. He says that although the Bulls were made out to special persons, this did not prevent the Canonization extending through the whole Church.

p. 56. Pope Benedict lib. ii. cap. 49. "De Testium examine." "Item, quid erit dicendum in hypothesi in qua testes prædicto modo deposuissent, hoc est, modo confuso et non explanato? Erit ne locus repetitioni? Repetitio profecto hæc olim erat in usu. S. P. Honorius III. visa relatione iudicum, quibus inquisitionem demandaverat in citata causa Canonizationis S. Gullielmi. Arch. sic eis rescripsit uti legitur apud Raynaldum ad an. 1224 § 47. "Ut igitur quod in hoc negligenter omisum est, per subsequentem diligentiam emendetur; discretioni vestræ per Apostolica scripta mandamus, quatenus vel dicta testium receptorum sub vestris sigillis per fideles nuntios ad nostram præsentiam, destinetis, vel inquisitionem solemnem iterum facientes, nobis plane ac plenarie, quæ singuli testes deposuerint rescribatis."

p. 57. Pope Benedict XIV. de Canoniz. lib. iv. pars I, has a long chapter (xxxi) "De liquoribus aliquando manantibus e Corporibus, Reliquiis, et Sepulcris Sanctorum." He quotes § 19, St. Basil. Hom. in Julittam Martyrem (t. 2. p. 35) "aquam laudibus extollit ex ejus sepulcro manantem;" also, "S. Greg. Turon. lib. i. cap. 30. De Gloria Martyrum. testatur suo tempore profluvium mannæ salutaris, e sepulcro S. Joanni's Evang. dimanasse. Et eodem lib. cap. 31. narrat mirabile mannæ et olei profluvium e sepulcro S. Andreæ." He goes on § 20. "De hisce liquoribus actum aliquando est in causis Canonizationum, in causa videlicet, Beati Will. Ebor. in Anglia Archiepiscopi. Vide Bull. Canoniz."

p. 60. The remaining part of St. William's history including the account of the Translation of his Remains, as also of the miracles consequent upon that event, is taken from the Lections nine in number which are in the York Breviary, 1493, and are appointed to be read on the Festival of the Translation. These are given at length in the Acta Sanctorum with this notice,

“ Interim revertor ad S. Willielmi Translationem : quæ quam festive fuerit Eboraci celebrata, docet nos egregius de eâ Sermo ex Anglico Codice Ms Macloviopoli (St. Malo) ad Bollandum transmissus, et pro Officii divini usu in Lectiones novem distributus : sed primis aliquot lineis mutilus, quarum videtur fuisse sensus : quod hujus S. Willielmi Natalis statim ab ejus morte, judicante populo, et consentiente ordinario (nam de Canonizatione aliqua per Romanum Pontificem nulla uspiam mentio) fuerit in totâ provincia,” &c.

In the York Breviary however of 1493, which is in the Bodleian the first lection begins as follows : “ Gloriosus antistes Eboracensis Willielmus postquam a seculo migravit multis ac magnis miraculis choruscavit. Unde ex decreto summi Pontificis et fratrum assensu Catalogo Sanctorum ascriptus est. Dies etiam obitus sui in tota provincia,” &c. and at this place the account in the *Acta Sanctorum* commences : so that the author of the above remark was mistaken in his suggestion as to what was the purport of the beginning of the Lection, as there is distinct mention made of the Canonization.

p. 65. “ The table of the miracles which are ascribed to this Saint, which are thirty-six in number, with the indulgence of Pope Nicholas, are yet to be seen in our vestry : but time, and of late years no care, has so obliterated them, that a perfect transcript cannot be had of them.”—Drake’s *Antiq. of York*, b. ii. ch. i. p. 419.

The miracles which are said to have taken place after the Translation, described at length in the *Acta SS. Vit. S. Gul.* § 42-46, are, the restoration of a child to life who had been drowned, at the shrine of St. William ; a knight Templar cured of lameness ; a deformed person cured during a procession of the Saint’s relics ; and a dumb woman restored to speech during the celebration of the mass, who having seen a vision of S. John of Beverley and S. William, came as a pilgrim to the shrine of the latter, in faith that she should be cured of her infirmity.

LIVES  
OF  
THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

---

St. Waltheof.

St. Robert.

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MANSUETI HÆREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.



LIVES OF

**St. Waltheof**

AND

**St. Robert of Newminster.**

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INTRODUCTION.

It may have been observed that hitherto there have been comparatively few miracles in the Lives of Cistercian Saints. There even seems to be a dislike to looking out for miracles, as arguing a want of faith. Thus St. Aelred, in a passage already referred to, says, "There is also another sort of curiosity, which is the worst, by which, however, those alone are attacked who are conscious within themselves of great virtues, I mean the experimenting on one's own sanctity by the exhibition of miracles, which is tempting God. And if a man consent to this very wicked vice and is disappointed, his anguish of soul will lead him into the straits of despair, or the sacrilege of blasphemy."<sup>1</sup> Again, that is a significant story told of the successor of St. Bernard, at Clairvaux, that he begged of the Saint to work no more miracles, as the concourse of people at his tomb distracted the devotion of the monks. In the two lives, however, which close the series of Cistercian Saints in England, there is a marked difference in this respect; both abound in that class of stories commonly called legends. Many of these are so well fitted to illustrate

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Car. 2. 24.

certain principles which should be borne in mind in considering medieval miracles, that they deserve some attention. Not that anything here said is intended to *prove* that the stories of miracles said to be wrought in the middle ages, are true. Men will always believe or disbelieve their truth, in proportion as they are disposed to admit or reject the antecedent probability of the existence of a perpetual church endowed with unfailing divine powers. And the reason of this is plain. Ecclesiastical miracles presuppose the Catholic faith just as Scripture miracles, and Scripture itself presupposes the existence of God. Men, therefore, who disbelieve the faith, will of course disbelieve the story of the miracles, which if it is not appealed to as a proof of the faith, at least takes it for granted. For instance, the real reason for rejecting the account of the vision which appeared to St. Waltheof in the Holy Eucharist, must be disbelief of the Catholic doctrine. Without, however, entering on so wide a subject, it will be enough to examine, as it were, the phenomena of the miracles themselves, and to see what can be made out as to their probable truth or falsehood.

First, then, no one can read the legends of the middle ages without observing their highly poetical character. They form in themselves a vast literature of every country in Europe, many of them containing the only contemporary history of the period at which they were written, and many having a beauty and a freshness, which has been observed by many who disbelieved them. Besides which, they are the exponents of a well-defined idea, and are formed on a religious type which is clear enough to those who talk most loudly against them. The notion of a saint which they embody is a very definite one, and the writers evidently know what they are



talking about. It seems most unphilosophical to suppose that such writers were men who knowingly wrote to deceive; the vast volumes of the Bollandists, illustrated as they are with such astonishing historical and antiquarian learning, would be most extraordinary compositions if this were the case. And, in fact, there are now comparatively few who take this view of the legends of saints. They are generally now opposed on the ground of their poetical character, and not as being intentional fabrications. In fact, the two objections are incompatible; no one would dream of calling a poet dishonest, because his narrative is fictitious. If he believes the stories on which he writes, he may be called superstitious, but that is a very different indictment. To call a tale poetical is, however, by no means to say that it is true; on the contrary, this is the very ground on which legends are commonly said to be false. They are thought to be the natural product of the Christian religion acting upon the vigorous imagination of a youthful people; they are the offspring of the human mind in one stage of its progress, and they come out of it as the acorn out of the oak, and the flower out of the plant. In other words, legends of saints are the creations of the mind of man in the same sense as the Hindoo or Greek mythology; Christianity, indeed being a purer religion, has substituted some holy virgin as a guardian for the sacred well, instead of the Grecian Naiad, but one being is as much a fiction as the other. And the legends themselves are a proof of this; they are observed to vary in character according to the country which gave them birth. The legends of the sandy Thebais, with their repose and Eastern gravity, contrast strongly with the wild stories of western hermits, which are the genuine products of the forest and the cavern by the sea shore. Celtic legends also have a

savage air peculiar to themselves, with their tales of serpents and monsters, reminding the reader strongly that St. Michael has just succeeded to the holy isles of the Druids; while Saxon stories are of a homely and domestic cast. All these legends, the argument proceeds, show their peculiar origin by their variety, just as the nature of the soil is betrayed by the plants which grow upon it. These legends, therefore, are of the earth, and we need rise no higher for their origin. Secondly, to bring the matter nearer to our subject, not only do these considerations account for the existence of legendary literature, but they account for visions and prodigies of all sorts. The same love of the marvellous which produces fairy tales and ghost stories, will also make the peasant fancy that he sees the elves dancing by moonlight on the mountain-side; and by the same law of our minds, the vivid imagination of a good man, acted upon by his devotion, might produce on his mind a strong impression which might take the shape of a vision. In the case of St. Waltheof, for instance, it may be observed that the visions which he saw occurred always on the feast days and holy times of the church. Now it may be that a high wrought state of mind, worked upon by long and exciting services, produced the visions, as the events of a day produce a dream.

This is the way in which men argue, and it is not necessary just now to inquire how far the fact on which the argument is grounded is true. Few would doubt that many legends of the lives of the Saints are strongly tinged by popular devotion, or it may be by superstition. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? When it is known that many islands on the savage coast of Brittany, for instance, were in a half heathen state, and required missionaries in the seventeenth century, can

they be supposed to have been less benighted in the tenth? It may, therefore, very safely be allowed that many legends of the middle ages are but a reflection of the truth rather than the truth itself. Some of them are mere myths, and belong to the same class as the beautiful stories of the Saintgrail, and of king Arthur's knights. And indeed this is the way in which most authors now regard them. The Bollandists are by no means sparing of such epithets as *ineptæ* and *ridiculæ*, applied to many legends which they have published. Time has gone on, and in its course men are altered too; and they can no longer receive indiscriminately what the faith of their ancestors fed upon. We must be men, it is said, and criticism and historic truth must take the place of simple belief.

This is not, however, what we would now dwell upon: our present object is rather to point out that with all the drawbacks that are to be made on the score of the superstition pervading a portion of ancient lives of Saints, the argument drawn out above does not cut the ground from under medieval miracles and visions in general, as it pretends to do. It is quite true that stories of miracles partake of the character of an imaginative age, and are tinged by the character of particular nations, yet this is no reason for supposing them to be untrue, for individuals partake of the tone of the age and country in which they live, and it is out of the characters of His saints that God produces the wonders which He operates in His church. The human side of events is by no means incompatible with the divine. The inspiration which puts into the heart of a Saint to work a miracle, by no means excludes his will and his temper; his angelic charity is employed in healing the sick miraculously, as in dressing their wounds or in

soothing their sorrows. The undaunted energy, and even the roughness and quaintness of his character, may come out in the midst of the supernatural power imparted to him.

And with respect to visions in particular, there seems no reason why the devotion of a saint should not in a certain sense produce a vision, just as grace implies our habits, and predestination our efforts. And yet, though the intense contemplation of one who is pure in heart may pierce through the veil and see the saints and angels before the throne, this does not exclude the agency of God, whose workmanship we are, though we work out our own salvation. It is a wide spread error by which men suppose that when they have classified all that they know of a subject, they have got to the bottom of the whole matter, and have a right to exclude whatever does not necessarily come within their system, even though it may not be incompatible with it. They think that they have discovered all that is to be known, when they have but found out the formal cause, that is, when they have analyzed their own idea, forgetting that the real cause still remains as far off from them as ever. Some philosophers have argued, that because the idea of God in the human mind is the creation of the soul of man, imagining to itself the supreme good, therefore God Himself is nothing more than the ideal standard of good dwelling naturally within us. But such men forget that, although the thought of God may come into the heart of man by a natural process, this is not incompatible with the fact of His existence as our Everlasting Creator and Master. And in like manner visions might be real, that is come from God, though they were ever so much the effect of the intense devotion of the Saint.

And to carry these remarks further, in matters

of physical science it is often said that men now-a-days have no superstitious views of such phenomena as earthquakes, eclipses, and thunder, because their causes have been discovered. Now it may or may not be superstitious to be afraid of thunder, but to say that it is caused by electricity removes none of those reasons for fear which affected men in the dark ages. What is meant by a law is only the human way of viewing in succession, what to Almighty God, and it may be even to the angels, is one and undivided. So it is quite true that "the glorious God maketh the thunder," though it is also true that electricity is the cause of it, and that it proceeds on a natural law. So also the dark ages might be right in ascribing certain extraordinary events to divine agency, even though men had discovered, which they have not, the psychological law on which such effects are produced. They might be connected with the imaginativeness of the human heart, for imagination raised by Christianity above its natural powers becomes intense devotion.

To go to another branch of the same subject, it is often said that what was called diabolical possession was only a natural disease called epilepsy, and therefore had nothing to do with devils. But evil spirits might have power over the body, and might always act in a peculiar way, so as to constitute a law. Or else they might bring to pass, in a supernatural way, effects which also happen from natural causes, so that exorcism may be a supernatural power, even though natural means can in time remove what may be done miraculously in an instant. Again, in the present day, strange effects of mind over matter have been discovered, and in some cases mesmerism seems to make an approach to what would formerly have been ascribed

and rightly to supernatural causes. But this so far from telling against medieval miracles, only proves that human souls and bodies possess mysterious powers on which the Holy Spirit may have deigned to work, and that things are possible which men have long denied on the score of their impossibility. Nay, supposing that Satan could thus in certain false systems of religion imitate some Christian miracles by signs and wonders, it would throw no discredit upon them. Natural philosophers have been said to draw down lightning from heaven and to make diamonds, but they do not make the slightest approach to the power of God, nor bridge over the infinite gulf which divides causation from creation.

It appears, then, that to talk of the power of imagination is nothing to the purpose, if it is meant to show that such visions as those with which St. Waltheof was favoured did not really come from heaven. Imagination, translated into the language of the Church, means devotion; and no one can tell how far Almighty God may have made use of the Saint's own devotion in framing the vision before the eyes of his soul. And what has been said on similar subjects by great writers in the Church falls in with this notion of the influence of the soul in such matters. St. Augustine discusses whether the cloven tongues of fire, seen on the first Whitsunday, were seen in the spirit within, as though they were without, or really without before the eyes of the flesh. In another place, he touches upon "the power of the soul in changing and influencing bodily matter,"<sup>2</sup> though, at the same time, he says, that it cannot be called the creator of the body, who is God alone. So also St. Thomas discusses the very case

<sup>2</sup> St. Aug. de Trin. 3. 8.

which, as will be seen, happened to St. Waltheof, of a child appearing at the time of the elevation of the Host. He thus determines that what was there seen was not the body of our Lord, but that an effect was produced upon the eyes of the Saint, "as though it were seen externally." "And yet," he continues, "this had nothing to do with deception, as in the case of magic charms, for such an appearance is formed by divine influence on the eye to figure a truth—viz., to show that the body of the Lord is really under the Sacrament; as also Christ, without deception, appeared to the disciples going to Emmaus."<sup>3</sup> Again, in an instance which brings us to close to St. Robert of Newminster, St. Godric, who does not at first seem likely to reason on what he saw, is recorded to have said, after seeing a vision of a departed soul, that he saw not the soul itself, for it was invisible, but that what he saw was a form which signified its presence.

And if it be asked, why should these visions be real, and alleged appearances of false gods and of beings created by superstition be untrue?—the answer is, that, as has been said before, the visions in the lives of Saints presuppose the truth of the Catholic faith, and are real because the faith is true. We believe Christian visions to be real because Christianity is real, and the portents of heathen mythology are false because they are part of a false religion. And here, as in many other respects, the analogy between the natural and the spiritual sight is perfect; for all our senses, and sight among the rest, require it to be taken for granted that the sensations which we feel are produced by an object without us; and philosophers have been found who reason very plausibly, that all that we see and touch is merely our-

<sup>3</sup> Summa Theol. 3. qu. 76, 8.

selves touching and feeling, just as faithless men argue that the visions of the Saints are mere creations of their own minds. Substance is taken for granted in our bodily vision, as the faith is presupposed in supernatural visions.

And in distinguishing what are most commonly called legends from what is historical in the lives of Saints, it should be borne in mind, that though the prevalence of a certain tone, which may be called poetical or romantic, does not throw discredit on miracles in general; yet it is quite true that, in many particular instances, the strange stories in medieval narratives are strongly tinged by the spirit of the age, call it poetic, superstitious, or faithful, as you will. The proof of it is, that a love of the marvellous evidently affects the narratives of historians as well as hagiologists; and this both makes it likely that the same tone should appear in accounts of what is confessedly supernatural, and also shows that truth and falsehood may be blended together without destroying each other. In the grave chronicles of the age, most of them proceeding from the lonely cell of some religious man, accounts of marvellous portents, of bright colours and strange figures seen in the sun and moon, are mingled with just as much of the news of the outer world, of the victories and defeats of kings, as were drifted into the monastery. If it were not for the undeniable life-like energy of the barons and kings who make their appearance, the reader would be tempted to put down the whole for a production of the vivid fancy of some solitary monk, so much does the whole scene savour of the romantic. Sometimes the list of portents reminds us of the marvels which appear in the pages of Livy. Even the shrewd William of Newbridge, though by no means



without his tinge of private judgment, is overcome by his love of the marvellous, and some accounts very like fairy tales appear in the midst of his facts. As a specimen of his narrations, in one place, among many other marvels, it is said that near Winchester some quarrymen found embedded in stone a live toad, with a gold chain and collar round his neck. In the same way, at a time when men were not given to patient investigation on any point, it is not wonderful that the lives of Saints should present manifold exaggerations, and that the convent traditions should in some cases grow, like any other narratives. The objections commonly urged that man is liable to error, and that inspiration alone is infallible, are in place here, however senseless they may be when they would sap the foundations of all history, by rejecting any amount of evidence. There is a good substratum of truth in the medieval lives of Saints, which will stand the attack of any philosophy which would reduce them to the state of myths; while at the same time the busy, romantic element of the human heart has naturally exercised itself on Christian Saints as it did on the champions of Christendom in the Holy Land. Evidence, internal and external, must be the criterion here, as in every other kind of history.

These remarks are the more apposite, because there are instances in Josceline's life of St. Waltheof which will illustrate what is meant. One of them is as follows: on a certain day, when one of the canons of Kirkham was celebrating mass in the presence of St. Waltheof, a spider fell into the sacred chalice about the time that the words *Agnus Dei* are sung; the celebrant, not knowing what to do, managed to attract St. Waltheof's attention, and asked him what course ought to be taken. He could not drink the contents of the chalice, because the

spider was a poisonous insect, and he could not take it out for fear of profanation. St. Waltheof, making a short prayer and signing the chalice with the cross, bade the canon boldly drink, in the Lord's name. Then Josceline, after detailing his admiration that the canon received no hurt, goes on to say: "When dinner was over and the canons were sitting in the cloister, the priest who had celebrated mass sat rubbing his finger, and after a short time a lump appeared on it, and lo! the spider breaking the skin, came out alive, to the wonder of all who were sitting round, and by the command of the prior was committed to the flames." Now there is no reason to doubt that the spider did fall into the chalice, and that the canon felt the difficulty and drank its contents, for spiders were then believed to be poisonous. As for the story of the reappearance of the insect, as the whole goes on the assumption that spiders are poisonous, and that there was a miracle in the case, it may fairly be concluded to be an excrescence on the original story, and that it had been appended to it in conventual tradition, just as any other narrative "*vires acquirit eundo.*" It, however, no more implies fraud, than the addition of this gold chain and collar to the neck of the unfortunate toad, which doubtless, was found in the quarry near Winchester. Many more instances might be taken from this source, but enough has been said to show how truth and fiction may lie together, blended in the same narrative. If it be impossible to separate them, that is a reason either for neglecting the whole, or for receiving the whole. Religious minds would probably take the latter alternative, not thinking it after all so very great a misfortune to believe a few miracles too much. They would rather venture a little than lose one record of God's dealings with his Saints. However, we do not believe it to

be in all cases impossible to make the separation. In the present instance, some attempt has been made to do so. Josceline, the monk of Furness, who is the author of the life in the Bollandists, wrote about sixty years after the death of St. Waltheof. He professes to draw his narrative from some aged monks of the abbey of Melrose. It seemed therefore lawful to give as much of his narrative as would be interesting, without relating every circumstance, which it contains.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, it will be well to see in what light such visions and miracles as are here related are considered by spiritual writers in the Catholic Church, that it may be seen how far they are from laying stress upon them, though they will not faithlessly set limits to God's grace in His dealings with His Saints. "There are some," says an author whom most men would call foolishly credulous,<sup>5</sup> "whom the devil deceives; but there are others, too, who are deceived by the weakness of their imagination, fancying that they see and hear extraordinary objects and voices, though in effect they see and hear nothing. There are some also who not only are deceived by the devil, or by themselves, but seek to deceive others by voluntary and diabolical wickedness. So we repeat what we have said; we must be on our guard, not easily to put faith in extraordinary things. Spiritual directors should take care to guide souls put under them in the ways of pure faith, which is the immediate union of the soul with God. This is the

<sup>4</sup> The precise date of his work cannot now be easily ascertained. It appears that he began it at the request of Patrick, Abbot of Melrose, and finished it after his death. Patrick succeeded William as Abbot in 1206, and died the year after. Josceline, therefore, probably finished his work shortly after 1207.

<sup>5</sup> Boudon, *L'Amour de Dieu seul*; discours préliminaire.

teaching of the great doctor of mystical theology, the blessed John of the Cross ; he gives it as a rule in his books, that such things as visions and revelations should be left to the judgment of God, and that we should remain in quiet faith, without dwelling upon them. This teaching shields us from all illusions of the devil ; for by resting in pure faith, a man cannot err. He walks by a sure path, and the light which guides him is infallible ; besides which, since these unmerited graces which God gives us, such as visions and revelations, come externally to us, and are independent of us, we therefore are safe in not examining them. I do not mean that directors should not make use of such marks as holy doctors have given us to discern the true Spirit of God in such extraordinary things from the evil spirit ; but I mean that, after all, we must suspend our judgment, and lay no great stress on such things, and lean entirely on faith. With respect to those persons who are the subjects of such extraordinary occurrences, they should not let their minds dwell upon them at all, but leave them to the judgment of God, whatever value they may have in His sight. Thus, if they are the work of the devil, he will be confounded ; if they come from the Holy Spirit, He will increase His blessings."

## LIFE OF

### St. Waltheof.

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THE lives of the Saints of the middle ages are like the ruins of their own monasteries, lovely and melancholy fragments, which are but indications of a beauty which has passed away from the earth. Not indeed as though the Church were dead, and there were no Saints now in Christendom, but a Saint of the nineteenth century will never be precisely like one of the twelfth. The beautiful infancy and youth of Christianity are past, and even Saints may partake something of the acuteness and activity of the age with which they have to contend. If Melrose could be roofed afresh, and the vaulted ceiling restored, the painted glass replaced in the east oriel, and the niches filled again, it certainly would not be a facsimile of the Melrose of six hundred years ago. But the building would not be so unlike its predecessor as the new members would differ from their brethren of old, though they wore the same habit and kept the same rule. But it is wrong to mourn over what must be; and perhaps the new brethren would in some respects surpass the old. So we must just take Melrose as it is, a beautiful ruin; and we will try to write the life of its holy Abbot Waltheof, imperfect as the attempt must be. We will do our best to put into shape the scanty records left by brother Josceline, just as a man standing on the Eildon hill on an autumn evening would fill up the outline formed against the glowing sky by the ruined abbey.

*How Waltheof lived in the World.*

There are some persons who, from their birth, appear destined to take part in the roughest scenes of the world's politics, and to this class Waltheof seemed to belong. He was apparently born to inherit the strongest prejudices, and to be placed amidst conflicting interests, in which he was unavoidably to take his part. He was of one of the most illustrious families of England, descended from the old kings and earls of Northumbria, from Ida, the bearer of flame, and from Siward, who had defeated the tyrant Macbeth, and set Malcolm Canmore on the throne. His grandfather, whose name he bore, was that Waltheof whom the Conqueror had first, as he thought, won to himself, by bestowing on him the hand of his niece Judith, but whom he had afterwards ruthlessly beheaded at Winchester. His body was taken to the Abbey of Croyland, where the affectionate remembrance of the poor Saxon canonized the victim of the Conqueror's revenge, and pilgrims often knelt at the tomb of the English martyr. The daughter of this Waltheof, Matilda, was given in marriage to Simon of St. Liz, a Norman noble, as if to obliterate the remembrance of her Saxon blood; and of this union were born two children, Simon and Waltheof. Not long after their birth, their father incurred the displeasure of Henry I., and he assumed the cross and went to the Holy Land. He left England, never to return; news soon came to his wife that she was a widow, for her husband had perished as a good soldier of the Cross in Palestine. Matilda was still young when this happened, and her cousin, King Henry, afterwards gave her in marriage to David of Scotland, and with her bestowed on him the possessions of her first husband. When

David inherited the throne of Scotland, his step-sons followed him, and were brought up in the palace of Dumfermline with his own children.

The course of Waltheof's life seemed thus to be marked out for him: he was to be a staunch defender of the Saxon line, and a hater of the Normans, who had slain his grandfather and caused the exile of his father; and he was to be a staunch partisan of the succession of the empress Matilda. But there are men who apparently come across their destiny—some for good, and others for bad—and of these was Waltheof. It was evident, however, from his infancy, that he was not made for the world which was moving around him. Their mother, Matilda, used to smile at the contrast between her two boys, when they were mere children, playing at her feet. While Simon, the elder, the future earl and warrior, was building castles of wood, and charging, at a mock tournament, astride on a cane, Waltheof would be raising churches of sticks and pebbles, making the sign of the Cross like a priest, and imitating the chants which he had heard in church. As he advanced in years he seemed hardly to change, so naturally and evenly did his character grow in strength and beauty, without losing its childlike freshness. It was as, says the Scripture, the righteous man blossoming as the lily. When he came to David's court, he showed the same purity and the same unearthly character; and so little did he seem to belong to the scenes which were passing about him, that the nobles of Scotland did not know what to make of him; and he puzzled them the more from the striking difference between him and his two companions, Prince Henry and Aelred. The high-spirited Henry was an indefatigable hunter, and marked out for a soldier from his birth; and even Aelred, who

from his bookish propensities might be classified with Waltheof, still showed some marked differences from his friend : he was more easily understood, from his frank and sociable temper. But Waltheof, without any appearance of moroseness, was fond of solitude ; he had but few friends, while Aelred had many. Again, Aelred was very cheerful, and took interest in all about him, but Waltheof might have seemed apathetic. Though none could look upon his bright countenance and think him gloomy, yet it was evident that the scenes which passed around him affected him but little : he was an unworldly character, and such always are incomprehensible to men of the world. King David alone saw through his step-son ; he used to take Waltheof with him into the noble forests which surrounded Dumfermline to hunt the wild deer ; and would give him his bow to carry, in order to keep him near himself. But the young lord soon grew weary of the chase, and giving up the care of the king's bow to some one else, he used to plunge deep into the woods ; and finding a level spot of green sward under the shade of some broad oak, he would read a book or kneel down to pray. One day David, who used to wonder at his periodical disappearance, came upon him in his retirement, and though the whole chase swept rapidly past him, David's quick eye had time to spy him out in his hiding place ; and when he came home, he said to his queen, "That son of thine is not of our stamp ; he is nothing to the world, nor the world to him ; depend upon it, he will either die young, or else fly away to the cloister."

The nobles about the court, however, did not take this view, and Waltheof still remained a mystery to them. They even made experiments upon him, as philosophers



would on some strange phenomenon. As far as they durst, by covert insinuations, they put evil before him, but his imperturbable simplicity baffled them. Waltheof probably did not know himself any more than they. It often happens that those whom God is leading on to perfection, are unconscious of the end to which they are tending. Those about them often think them incapable of anything very great, and they themselves have often not made up their mind what course of life is to be theirs. The notion of choice does not come before them, till something external forces them to election, and they choose at once the better part. So in the case of Waltheof, an event occurred which opened the eyes of all parties, both his own and those of the nobles, who were looking on to see how this would end. A young and noble lady fell in love with Waltheof, and the courtiers used with delight to watch them speaking together, hoping that at last the lord Waltheof was becoming like his neighbours, and was human after all. Soon after, some one spied glittering on Waltheof's finger a gold ring with a sparkling gem, which the lady had given him. The news soon spread that he was in a fair way of being a confessed lover; there was joy in the gay circles of the court that day, for they thought that Waltheof had fallen from his high estate, and had thus become like an ordinary mortal. They were however, mistaken, for when this report reached him, it opened his eyes at once to his situation. He must either make up his mind to marry or to go into religion. The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, and they taught Waltheof a lesson, that such attachments are dangerous. There can be no half measures, and the crucifixion must be complete.

So Waltheof took the shining jewel off his finger and threw it into the fire. From that moment, he looked upon himself as destined for the priesthood.

## 2. *How Waltheof quitted the World.*

He was now considered as certain of a bishoprick either in England or Scotland; and when the king of Scotland was his step-father, and the king of England his mother's cousin, it was no unreasonable conjecture. Waltheof, had, however, by no means the same views for himself; his only wish was to serve God in the lowest station in his church. While he was revolving these thoughts in his mind, Aelred announced his intention of becoming a monk and of quitting Scotland. It seemed much less likely that the gay and open-hearted Aelred should be the first to go, but so it was;<sup>6</sup> and Waltheof must have felt very solitary, when the only friend who understood his feelings and character had gone into religion and had left him in the world. He was not one who could make new friends in a day, and he had still some time to remain in solitude after Aelred had left him. He found more external obstacles than Aelred had met with, in his way from the world to the cloister. He was an important political personage; and in times when the north of England was a debateable ground, it was of the utmost consequence to put the great sees into the hands of friendly churchmen, as not long after Henry II. saw when he created the bishoprick of Carlisle to counteract the see of Glasgow. Waltheof,

<sup>6</sup> Waltheof did not leave Scotland till his brother was an earl, *i. e.* probably not till Stephen's reign.

as David's step-son, would have been a more respectable personage to fill St. Cuthbert's chair than William Comyn, who was put in by Matilda's party. He was not therefore his own master. His brother Simon, too, whose warlike propensities made him look upon his brother's love for the cloister as fanaticism, had early in Stephen's reign become earl of Northampton;<sup>7</sup> and he as well as king David opposed Waltheof's wish. At length he stole away from David's court, and took refuge in Yorkshire, at a priory of Austin canons, dedicated to St. Oswald, one of the ancestors of his family. Here Waltheof hoped that the world would forget him. "Here," says brother Josceline, "he determined to lie hid and die, as, says the blessed Job, in his little nest; and to grow up noiselessly as a palm-tree, hidden from the provoking of all men in the secret place of God's countenance, forgotten by all his kith and kin, like a useless vessel flung aside, like a dead man in the hearts of his friends." Such was Waltheof's wish. "But the Lord of all," continues Josceline, "had decreed far otherwise." First of all, he was made sacristan of St. Oswald's, and then the canons of Kirkham chose him for their prior. And here at last he seemed to have obtained the rest for which his soul longed; and indeed many men might envy him the place in which his lot was cast. It was in a beautiful valley in Yorkshire, not far from the spot where the waters of the Rye, after passing under the walls of the abbey of Rievaulx, joined the broader stream of the Derwent. He was therefore now a near neighbour to Aelred; the abbey and the priory had a common founder, and their posses-

<sup>7</sup> v. Knyghton ap. Twysden, 2386, and Brompton, 1030. Brompton says, earl of Huntingdon, p. 975, which he was not till afterwards, as appears from John of Hexham, p. 258.

sions touched each other, and the monks had frequent intercourse with the canons. Among their visitors at some time or other was certainly Aelred, for he mentions Kirkham, and calls it a most lovely spot. His friends in Scotland evidently bore no ill-will to him for his flight from them, for his half-brother, prince Henry, loved Kirkham for its prior's sake, and bestowed many lands upon it. His canons too loved Waltheof for all his virtues, but specially for his humility; for he did not rule over them with a high hand, but treated them as brethren.

He might have quitted them, if he had pleased, for a much higher station. In 1140, Thurston, archbishop of York, died, and there were great deliberations in the court of Westminster. The question was, who would make a respectable archbishop, and at the same time a good partisan of king Stephen. From Waltheof's noble birth and reputation for sanctity, he would have been an obvious person to fix upon; and though, from his connection with king David, he was not at first sight likely to fulfil Stephen's conditions, yet it seems that his brother Simon had taken the side of the king against Matilda, so that there were hopes that he might follow his example. Many nobles urged Stephen to appoint him, but the king was afraid of him. With all Waltheof's sweetness and humility, there was a certain unmanageable element in his character which did not suit Stephen. It is a dangerous experiment to place on an episcopal throne a man who could neither be bribed nor frightened. In fact, what could Waltheof be bribed with? He had already given up everything on earth. He had no earthly wishes; so what could be done with such a man? Again, if he did wish for anything, it was to suffer humiliation with his Lord; force, therefore, would have been equally unavailing. So,

on the whole, king Stephen thought that Waltheof was not the man to be archbishop of York. All this while the prior of Kirkham was very quietly in the wilds of Yorkshire, utterly ignorant that he was the subject of grave deliberation in high places, till one day he received intimation that the puissant earl of Albemarle<sup>8</sup> had arrived at Kirkham, and wished to see him. After some conversation, the noble earl said, "How long dost thou mean to bring dishonour on our house, by burying thyself in this dungeon of a cloister? Why not show thyself in public oftener? If thou wouldest but take the trouble to gain the favour of the king and his counsellors by gifts and promises, thou wouldest win any bishoprick thou mightest affect. If thou wilt but promise to give me the township of Shirburn, to be held by me during my lifetime, I will undertake to get thee the archbishoprick of York." His lordship of Albemarle certainly knew very little with what sort of man he had to deal; he was therefore, probably, not a little surprised to see the pale cheek of the gentle monk suffused with red, and his eye kindle for a moment with something like anger. It however passed away as quickly as it came; and Waltheof calmly said, "Be thou quite sure that thou wilt never see me seated in a bishop's throne, nor thyself in possession of the township of Shirburn."

It was not, however, surprising that a worldly-minded man, like the earl, should not be able to penetrate the depth of Waltheof's character. It would have been a hard matter for any one who saw the lowly prior

<sup>8</sup> William, this earl of Albemarle, was son of Stephen, who was the brother of Judith, St. Waltheof's grandmother. Stephen and Judith were the children of Odo, earl of Albemarle, by Adeliza, sister of the Conqueror. William was first cousin to Waltheof's mother.

abasing himself beneath the lowest lay-brother of the community, to tell how highly favoured was this humble soul. It would have been difficult to suppose that this humble man who busied himself so noiselessly and regularly with the rule of his convent, and threw his mind into all the wants and desires of his brethren, was all the while wrapt up in the contemplation of heavenly things in a way in which none but those who are dead to earth can know. Sometimes our blessed Lord would, as it were, break through the cloud; and as after His resurrection He would appear suddenly in the midst of His disciples, so now and then in Waltheof's life, He all at once converted contemplation into vision, and gave His servant sensible indications of His presence. One of these visions appears to have occurred at Kirkham. One Christmas-day, while the convent was celebrating the nativity of the Lord, as the Prior was elevating the Host, in the blessed sacrifice of the mass, he saw in his hands a child fairer than the children of men, having on his head a crown of gold, studded with jewels. His eyes beamed with light, and his face was more radiant than the whitest snow; and so ineffably sweet was his countenance, that the prior kissed the feet and the hands of the heavenly child. After this the divine vision disappeared, and Waltheof found in his hands the consecrated wafer.

The servants of Christ are, however, never suffered by Him to dwell on the joys which He vouchsafes to give them. When the Apostles were, after our Lord's ascension, straining their eyes to penetrate the cloud which carried Him out of their sight, two angels appeared, to ask them why they stood gazing up into heaven. So the vision which Waltheof saw was but for a moment, or rather it hardly could be measured by time at all; and

when it disappeared, and he came down from the altar and went back into the monastery to set about his business, all looked as it did before. The cloisters echoed to his footsteps as if nothing had happened, and the canons, bowing in silence to their prior as they passed him, reminded him that he must go on with his work. And sad work he soon had upon his hands; that same archbishoprick of York which he had rejected was now a bone of contention in the north; and news arrived at Kirkham that William, the treasurer, Stephen's nephew, had been elected, but that the presence of the earl of York at the election made men suspect that undue influence had been exerted, if not by William, at least by his friends. William's character was not such as to please Waltheof's Cistercian friends; he was amiable indeed, and none accused him of immorality; but he was at that time indolent and magnificent. They were unsparing in their censures, these Cistercian monks; popes, cardinals, and bishops equally came under their lash, and in this case they determined to oppose William's election as being uncanonical. Waltheof was already a Cistercian in heart, and he joined himself to his neighbours, William, abbot of Rievaulx, and Richard, abbot of Fountains, in their efforts to obtain a sentence against the election. The parties in opposition to each other in the diocese of York were, on the whole, regulars against seculars, that is, at least in this case, strictness against laxity; and Waltheof did not hesitate which side to choose. In 1142 he appealed against the election with the abbots of Fountains and of Rievaulx, and others of the regular as well as some of the cathedral clergy. In 1144 we find him at Rome with his colleagues in the appeal. No particulars appear of his journey across the Alps; but doubtless the tombs of the Apostles saw more of Waltheof than the papal

court. How they sped in their cause has been too well narrated elsewhere to require notice in this place ; besides which, it has little to do with Waltheof's history. He brought back to Kirkham a heart not a whit more in love with the great world on account of the glimpse which he had seen of it. All that he had seen on his way to and from the great city remained on his mind like a bewildered dream ; and neither the snowy Alps, nor the blue lakes and sunny sky of Italy, seemed to him half so beautiful as the rugged outline of the Blackmoor hills, and the first sight of the green banks of the winding Derwent and the tower of his own church at Kirkham, from which the bells were ringing to welcome his arrival ; and the brethren issuing out of the church with cross and banner to meet their prior.

### *3. How Waltheof became a Monk.*

The poor brethren of Kirkham were, however, soon to lose him. Was it restlessness, this desire of quitting his station at Kirkham that arose within him, or was it a longing for obedience, and for giving up his will to that of a superior ? A great struggle went on in his heart ; for, says brother Josceline, " There increased every day in his heart the hatred of worldly pomp and the desire of his heavenly country, and he was bent on embracing a stricter order. Such was the continued wish of his heart ; but he still pondered over it, weighing with discretion the arguments for and against it. He desired instead of a canon to become a monk, and above all a monk of the Cistercian order, which seemed to him stricter and more austere than that of the canons of St. Austin. Still, as he used to tell of himself, he feared



lest his weakness should sink under such a burden. He often prayed to the Angel of great counsel that He would illumine and strengthen his spirit with the Spirit of counsel and of might, that he might choose with wise counsel, and hold fast with might whatever was best for the health of his soul. He feared lest perchance an angel of Satan, who often transforms himself into an angel of light, should be giving him poison to drink out of a golden cup. As, however, after patient waiting and long trial, his heart continued still firm and unmoved as a pillar; he felt that the Lord had visited him, and had drawn him on to conceive this design in his heart." He would not, however, trust his own view of the case, and so he bethought himself of an old friend of his, whom he was now to meet in a new capacity. William, his companion in his journey to Rome, had died, and Aelred, his playmate and the friend of his youth in the court of Scotland, had succeeded as Abbot. So Waltheof went along the banks of the Derwent, then up the beautiful valley of the Rye to Rievaulx, where we may well imagine that he was a welcome guest, and not the less so when he stated the purpose of his visit. The result of it was that Aelred decided that Waltheof might quit Kirkham. He did not, however, claim him for Rievaulx, else his decision might appear interested. The two friends probably thought it would be too great happiness to be together in the same monastery. So the matter was compromised by Waltheof's flying away from his priory to the abbey of Warden, in Bedfordshire, which was a colony from Rievaulx, and also founded by William d'Espec.

Waltheof sought the cloister of Warden to obtain peace, but instead of finding what he wanted, he only raised about his head a storm on which he had not cal-

culated. First, the canons of Kirkham did their best to recall him; they even had recourse to ecclesiastical tribunals to force him to return; but they were unable to effect their purpose. After this, however, a greater trial awaited him. He had also placed himself very nearly within the limits of his brother's earldom. Now Simon by no means appreciated Waltheof's love of humiliation. On the contrary, he considered it a dishonour to the noble blood of the old kings of Northumberland that a scion of their stock should be a novice in a poor Cistercian monastery. A mitred abbacy he would not have quarrelled with, but that his brother should be the lowest monk in a low convent was intolerable; and he sent a message to the brethren of Wardon that he would burn the abbey over their heads if they allowed his brother to remain amongst them. The poor monks trembled, for they well knew Simon was a man to keep his word, and amidst the general license of the period, burning an abbey was not so very rare as to make it remarkable. Waltheof, therefore, was again a fugitive, cast out on the wide world by his own mother's son. But our Lord has promised to give us an hundred fold that which we give up for His sake; and so when Waltheof's own brother turned against him, Aelred, who was more to him than his unnatural brother, was given back to him. The monks of Wardon, when they found themselves obliged to send their novice away, transferred him to Rievaux, where he was out of the reach of his brother.

Henceforth Waltheof's external trials are over; yet our Lord, who never will leave His Saints to be without the cross, now prepared for him an interior trial, which was harder to bear than any other. Hitherto he had walked in the light of God's countenance in spiritual

joy ; but now the countenance of the Lord no longer shone upon him, and there had succeeded a cold and dreary state of darkness, in which he seemed to have lost sight of the object of his faith. He felt neither joy nor sorrow ; he had no feeling at all. When he thought on the Passion, he did not weep ; and when he meditated on the Resurrection, there was the same dull blank in his soul. Formerly, fasts and vigils, and bodily suffering of all sorts, were a joy to him, because they were a means of partaking in the crucifixion of his Lord ; but now all the various actions of his monastic life were gone through mechanically, as a daily task. The doctrines of the Mirror of Charity were exactly suited to his case ; but, as generally happens in such temptations, he fancied that his state had something peculiar in it, which exactly excepted it from the consolations which Aelred held out. He thought that he had done wrong in leaving his priory, and he was sorely tempted to quit the Cistercian order before he finally took the vows. The devil, who knows well that obedience and patience are the proper means of escaping, in God's own time, from such spiritual depression as then weighed down his heart, was anxious to make him by a definite act break away from Rievaulx, and take the law in his own hands. But it is best to give the whole in Josceline's words :—" When Waltheof had spent some time in the cell of the novices, by a temptation of the Evil one, the observance of the rule became loathsome to him ; the food appeared to him tasteless, the clothing rough and vile, the manual labour hard, the psalms and night-watches wearisome, the whole course of the order too austere. When he thought on the former years which he had spent as a prior, it grew upon him that the rule of the canons, though less austere, was more in accordance with Christian discre-

tion, and more fit for the saving of souls. As soon, however, as he felt this suggestion creep into his heart, he sought, in constant and earnest prayer, an antidote for its poison. After, however, the temptation far from diminishing, had only increased, so that he debated whether he should quit the Cistercian order and go back to his canons, he was at length relieved by the Lord, and blushed at his own weakness. For, one day after the bell had sounded for the office, at one of the canonical hours, and all the novices had gone out in seemly order, he alone remained behind in the cell. Led by the impulse of the Spirit, he threw himself across the threshold, half in and half out of the cell, and praying, with many tears, he said, 'O God Almighty, Creator of all, who knowest and dispensest all things, whether it be thy good pleasure that I remain a monk, or that I become again a canon, shew me, O Lord ; and take away from me this temptation which afflicts my soul.' And our Lord heard his prayer, and soon, almost without feeling, the mourner felt 'the dull hard stone within him' disappear. He never knew what happened to him in that hour, or how it happened, but he felt himself raised off the ground, and found himself in the seat which belonged to him in the cell, and where he used to read and meditate. Nothing can express so well what he then felt as the words of an English poet, whom we have almost unconsciously quoted :—

These are thy wonders, hourly wrought,  
Thou Lord of time and thought,  
Lifting and lowering souls at will,  
Crowding a world of good or ill  
Into a moment's vision ; even as light  
Mounts o'er a cloudy ridge, and all is bright,  
From west to east, one thrilling ray  
Turning a wintry world to May.

Waltheof never felt the temptation after this ; and in due course, at the end of the year, he received the white habit at the hands of Aelred. Great must have been the joy of both in that hour when Aelred put the habit upon his friend with the usual words, " The Lord put off thee the old man with his deeds," and the convent responded, " Amen."

#### *4. How Waltheof became an Abbot.*

Waltheof and Aelred had been, as it were, drifted together for a little time, probably that Waltheof might be strengthened for the work which was now before him. This was the reason that the temptation above-mentioned was sent to him, according to brother Josceline. " By a wondrous providence," he says, " our God, in his wondrous mercy, permitted him whom He destined for the government of souls to be tried by this temptation, for the increase of his crown, and that by his own experience he might have compassion on others." And he proceeds to tell us what was this government of souls. In the year 1147, the monks of Melrose elected him their Abbot, and sent to Rievaulx to beg of Aelred to give him permission to accept the office. Again, therefore, the two friends were separated, though not for ever, for the abbot of Rievaulx was the regular visitor to the community of Melrose. It was Waltheof's lot to win back all his old friends in the course of his life ; after many years, he now found again his step-father king David, and his brother prince Henry. How his whole former life must have rushed upon him as he re-crossed the border, after so many years of monastic trials ! His life, as a courtier in Scotland, must have

appeared a very point in his existence, and the adventure of the ring and the lady at that distance almost ludicrous. When he reached his abbey, he found himself lord of an extensive domain; for though the abbot of Melrose was not the mitred prelate that he afterwards became, yet the whole countryside was in his hands. The people had been all but converted by St. Cuthbert, as prior of the monastery; and king David had endowed the community with extensive lands, so that the abbot of Melrose, by a double title, was spiritual and temporal lord of a large part of Tweeddale. Waltheof found his abbey in a delicate state. Richard, the first abbot of New Melrose, had just been deposed for harsh conduct towards the monks; the new abbot had, therefore, to recover the authority lost by his predecessor, without irritating the brethren, who, of course, were exceedingly sensitive to any exertion of discipline on the part of their spiritual ruler.

As Melrose was, in point of fact, a new abbey, this state of things might have ruined it. The abbey had seen strange vicissitudes: first, it had come under St. Columban's rule,<sup>9</sup> with all its minute and severe penances, and its uncompromising severity. It seems hard to say precisely when it became Benedictine, for the rules of

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Michelet thinks that St. Columban's rule differed from that of St. Benedict, in that it was mystical to such an extent as to make light of the grossest sins of the flesh. If he had construed the passage on which he founds his opinion, he would have seen that it has no reference to actual guilt, but was a provision to exclude the very suspicion of it. *Si quis monachus dormierit in una domo cum muliere, duos dies in pane et aqua.* What he translates, *S'il ignorait que ce fut une faute,* means *Si nescierit mulierem esse in domo.* It would be invidious to point out a blunder however gross in so long and so able a history, if so monstrous a conclusion had not been founded upon it.—*Histoire de France*, tom. i. 277.

St. Columban and of St. Benedict were not so far opposed to each other that they were incapable of existing side by side. Some communities observed both together, till at length St. Benedict's rule got the day, as being the wisest legislation for monks, considering the average capabilities of man. While St. Columban's monks fasted every day till evening, St. Benedict varied the hour at different times of the year. Again, there is a special provision for difference of climate in the Benedictine habit, which is not the case in that of St. Columban. On the whole, the Benedictine rule was found on experience the better. It was framed in that mild Italian spirit which was needed to temper the fierceness of our northern blood; and probably the rejection of the Scottish usages about Easter, and the Benedictine rule, came hand in hand into Melrose. Certainly St. Cuthbert, who was himself a convert from the Scottish mode of keeping Easter, was also the first to introduce St. Benedict's rule into Lindisfarne. This is bringing the matter very near Melrose, and seems to point to him as the person under whom the abbey first became Benedictine. In the time of Waltheof's predecessor it underwent another change, for king David had made it Cistercian, and put it under the jurisdiction of Rievaulx. The convent seems to have been entirely removed from its old spot, for, about half a mile from the present ruins of the abbey, is a place which tradition assigns as the site of old Melrose, on a promontory, stretching so far into the Tweed that the waters all but convert it into an island. The convent did not at first flourish in its new locality, owing to the harshness of abbot Richard, and perhaps to the impatience of the community under their new rule. The monks were very anxious to get rid of their abbot,

but they were afraid to take any steps to get him deposed, as he was an intimate friend of the king. At last, they hit upon the expedient of electing Waltheof in his room. This effectually disarmed David's anger, and Waltheof was joyfully welcomed by him back to his dominions.

Waltheof thus found himself again a man in authority. During the rest of his life he was now to be everything for other people, and nothing for himself. Of the many years that he spent at Melrose but little is known; how they passed, however, we may judge by the kind of idea which was still preserved of him in the abbey at the time when Josceline wrote his life. Every tradition points to the paternal kindness and sweetness of his rule. The old monks still told of him, that when a monk, who had fallen into a grievous fault, had once confessed it publicly and done penance, he would always punish severely any one who reproached the offender, or made any allusion to his fault. "Often he had in his mouth," says Josceline, "that saying of the blessed Hugh of Cluny, 'If either happened to me, I would rather be punished for showing too much mercy, than for too much severity.' In the secret of the confessional, he showed himself so mild and soothing a physician, that, however stubborn was the breast of the sinner, the droppings of his words of holy consolations would soften it to a true and fruitful penitence; and, by smiting it with the rod of the Lord's Cross, he would cleave the hard rock, till it burst forth into a fount of tears; and then, when he saw him weep, tears of compassion used to flow from his eyes." A tradition still remained of the beauty of his countenance; and it was said that, notwithstanding his austerities, his face had still a delicate colour in the midst of its paleness.



Besides this, the earnestness of his preaching was remembered, as well as his eloquent and lucid speech, whether he spoke in French, English, or Latin, of all which languages he was perfect master. With these qualities and acquirements, it is not wonderful that he should be said to have gained an immediate influence on all who came in his way, by his persuasive words and kindness of manner. And this overflowing love extended itself even to animals. Stories were told of his affection for the old grey horse which he constantly rode, and which he used playfully to call his brother Grizzle.<sup>1</sup> He was even known to punish himself severely with the discipline used in the order for having killed an insect, saying that he had taken away the life of a creature of God, which he could not restore.

It was, however, not only within the walls of the abbey that his kindness of heart was known. The abbot of Melrose, as head of the Cistercian order in Scotland, was not a man who could always remain within the cloisters of his monastery. He had to go up into the Highlands as far as Elgin to found the abbey of Kinloss; and at another time down among the Cumberland hills, to lead a colony from Melrose to Holmcultram. In his time, too, an abbey was projected by his half-brother Prince Henry, and the site was fixed upon near the town of Cupar-angus, not far from the banks of the river Isla; it was not, however, put into execution till the time of his successor. His greatest sphere of action was the wild country around Melrose itself. The abbot's grey horse and his truly apostolic retinue were well known in the valley of the Tweed, and among the many winding glens, which each sends its tributary stream into the broad river, along

<sup>1</sup> Frater Ferrandus, v. Ducange in voc.

the bank of which lay the possessions of the abbey. This was the very ground which had witnessed St. Cuthbert's labours before he was made bishop of Lindisfarne, and the Saint had never a worthier successor than abbot Waltheof. His retinue was not of the kind which brother Josceline regrets was becoming in fashion among the Cistercian abbots of his time. They could not sleep, he says, for a night in a grange of the abbey without a train of servants and numerous sumpter-horses with pack-saddles containing mantles of the finest cloth, lined with lamb's wool. His train consisted of a monk and a lay-brother, with three boys to look after the horses. The abbot was so little solicitous about his personal appearance, and travelled with so little luggage himself, that he used to ride with the boots and other apparel of his attendants slung on in front, to save them the trouble of carrying them.

He was, however, not the less beloved by the vassals of the abbey because he travelled about in the guise of a poor man. Melrose was the regular refuge of the whole countryside, in the midst of the many physical sufferings which came upon the peasantry in those hard times. Sometimes grievous famines came upon the land, and the whole population from a great distance round used to assemble about the abbey. It required faith to undertake to feed these multitudes, and God rewarded the faith of the abbot, by working miracles to enable him to do what he had undertaken. At one time, it is said, a sore distress afflicted the country, and no one knew what to do. It was yet three months to the harvest, and the last year's provision was all spent. The corn was still green in the valleys and on the hill-sides; and what was to be done in the meanwhile, before autumn came? Melrose was the only resource, and so all trooped off to

the Tweed side with their wives and children, and thronged the abbey gates. It was hardly possible that the granaries of the monks could supply them; but at least it would be better to die under the abbey walls, where the brethren would administer the rites of the church to the dying, than to lie down and perish in detachments in their lonely glens. A vast crowd, therefore, collected together, and, as it were, besieged the gates of Melrose. Waltheof went out with Thomas the cellarer and some of the brethren to learn how large was the multitude. He found that they had regularly encamped about the abbey, under the trees of the many woods, and on the level grounds by the side of the Tweed, for two miles around; four thousand men were said to be assembled on the spot. Waltheof turned to Thomas, and asked him how this number of men were to be nourished till the autumn. Thomas was called in the country the good cellarer, on account of his kindness to the poor; he said that the numerous flocks and herds of the abbey might be slain to feed them; but, he added, all the corn of the abbey was consumed except what remained in the two granges of Gattonside and Eildon. The abbot, on hearing this, took his crosier in his hand and crossed the Tweed to Gattonside, then a grange belonging to the abbey, now a village smiling amongst its orchards opposite to Melrose. He then went into the granary, and striking his crosier into the corn, knelt down and prayed with many tears. He remained a long time on his knees, and, when he rose, he made the sign of the cross, and went away; he also proceeded to an upland farm called the Eildon grange, and did the same thing there; then he turned to Thomas and said, "Now disperse boldly, and give to the poor and to ourselves, for God will give the increase, and multiply enough for the use of both."

The monk did so, and the abbot's faith was rewarded, for the granaries of the two granges lasted out the three months which intervened to the harvest.

It was not, however, only among the poor of the land that Waltheof obtained influence; his noble birth, and his brother's high station, made him a conspicuous character; and whenever the business of the abbey for a moment brought him in contact with his lofty kindred, the contrast between his poverty and the station to which he was born acted as a practical homily in a place where the voice of religion was seldom heard. He once had occasion to go to king Stephen, who, as well as the king of Scotland, was his kinsman. This meeting with Stephen took place in the open air, and he found him standing with Simon, the earl of Northampton, his own brother. The abbot had not altered his apparel or increased the number of his attendants, though he was going into the king's presence. He appeared as usual on his old grey horse, with the boots of the grooms slung on before him instead of costly trappings; and altogether he was a very uncouth figure to appear among the nobles, who were round the king, dressed in their burnished armour, it could not be denied. His brother felt ashamed of him as he approached, and said: "See, my lord king, how my brother and thy kinsman does honour to his lineage." Stephen fixed his eyes on the abbot, and said with his usual oath, "By God's birth, if thou and I had only the grace to see it, he is an honour to us; he is an ornament to our race, even as the gem adorns the gold in which it is set." Then he came forward and kissed the abbot's hand, and asked for his blessing, and bent his head to receive it. He granted Waltheof all that he wanted, and took leave of him. After he was gone, Stephen remembered his own troubled life, how he had

to fight for his crown, and how little it profited him. He was a merciful prince, and of much good feeling, and was affected by this encounter. He was no friend to churchmen, on bad terms with the Pope and with both English archbishops; but his religious feelings were roused, and he burst into tears, and said, "This man has put all worldly things under his feet, but we are in chase after this fleeting world, and are losing body and soul in the pursuit." Such was the effect of the sight of Waltheof on Stephen; his prayers for his brother had a more lasting result, though he had to wait long to see the fruit of them. Simon listened at last to his brother's exhortations, and repented sincerely of his irregular life. He founded the abbey of St. Andrew at Northampton, in which house St. Thomas afterwards took refuge, as well as a nunnery dedicated to St. Mary without the same town, and the Cistercian abbey of Saltrey, dependent on the house of Warden.

The favour of God was manifested to Waltheof in other ways besides this answer to his prayers. Our blessed Lord rewarded the crucified soul of His servant with a foretaste of those joys which He will give to His blessed ones in heaven. Sometimes, at long intervals, when the abbot was keeping his Christmas or Easter festival in the church at Melrose, Christ was pleased to manifest Himself to His Saint in visions, one of which we will give in the words of Josceline:—"Once when on Easter-night he celebrated the vigil, and the convent was chaunting psalms and hymns, the Saint saw in the Spirit the whole course of the Lord's Passion, as though it were going on before his eyes. It seemed to him that he saw the Lord, after the scourging and mocking, bearing the crown of thorns upon His head, crucified on the tree, His hands and feet distended by

the nails. He thought that he saw Him giving up the ghost, and commending His soul into the hand of the Father, and afterwards pouring forth from His pierced side blood and water, to be our bath and our chalice, the price and the reward of man's salvation. He looked upon His soul, separated from the body, spoiling hell, and, followed by a numberless multitude of souls, coming out from the pit, resuming the body, bringing joy to the Angels by His resurrection, and by His appearance prostrating the soldiers, who were set to watch lest the Life should arise from the dead. Then in a vision he saw Him beautiful, in His robes of glory, going forth in the greatness of His strength, bringing into paradise the spoils of captivity."

### *5. How Waltheof was taken to his rest.*

This was the way in which the Lord recompensed him for the austerities with which he crucified his flesh, for his intense devotion, and for the many nights spent on the cold stones in the church, after the brethren had retired to rest, when compline was over. But He further rewarded him, by taking him to his rest from the cares of the world, and by calling him away while he was still at Melrose in the midst of his monks.

Waltheof had been many years abbot of Melrose, and there seemed but little likelihood of his being disturbed by attempts to remove him. He was, however, to have another trial before he died. In the year 1159, when St. Aelred happened to be at Melrose, the brethren were one day surprised to see a large and glittering cavalcade approach the abbey: it was composed partly of ecclesiastics, partly of men whose dress and bearing shewed

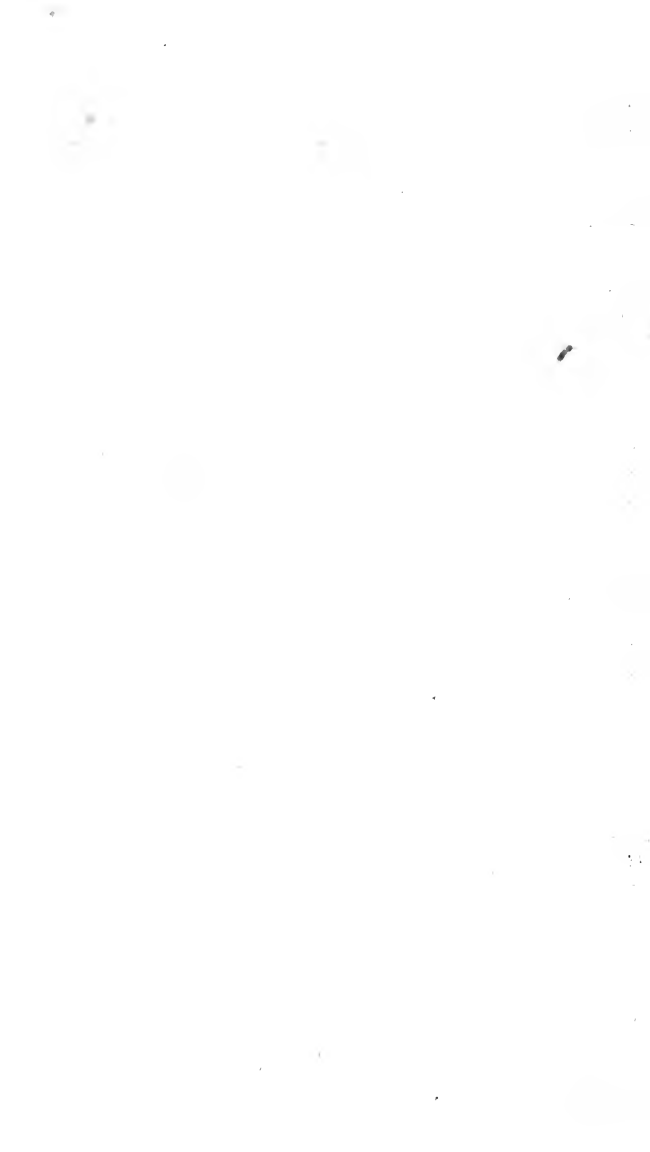
them to be of high rank. They proved to be several of the canons, accompanied by the great men of the realm, come to offer Waltheof the vacant bishopric of St. Andrew's. The abbot, as they had expected, refused the see; but they had recourse to St. Aelred, as his superior, to force him to accept it. The Saint enjoined him on his obedience to accept it. Waltheof, however, begged his friend to hear him in private; and, when they were together, he informed him that God had revealed to him that he had now not long to remain in the world, and that the charge was too much for one who was soon to sicken and die. St. Aelred looked mournfully at his friend, and saw that, from his emaciated features and wasted frame, death could never be looked upon as unlikely; but he would not believe the message which Waltheof gave him; he shut his eyes to the notion that his friend was to go to his rest before him, and leave him alone upon earth; he therefore persisted in his command. Then they returned together to the chapter-house, where the assembly was anxiously waiting for their return. All were glad to hear St. Aelred's decision; but Waltheof stood up and said, "I have put off my old garment, how should I put it on again? I have washed my feet clean, how should I stain them again with the dust of the world's business?" Then he added, solemnly, with the tone and manner of a prophet, "Believe me, ye will elect another man, and have him for your bishop." Then he pointed with his finger to a stone in the pavement of the chapter-house, and said, "There is the place of my rest; here will be my habitation, among my children, as long as the Lord wills." All who were present saw that he was resolved, and the assembly retired, saying that they would let the matter rest for a time.

Waltheof was right ; soon after this he was taken violently ill; his body was racked with pains. About the time of the dog-days, says Josceline, he grew very much worse, and all men thought that he must die at once. Nevertheless he lived for three weeks after this in dreadful pain of body, but perfectly collected in mind, so that in the intervals of his agonies he used to call the brethren around him, and exhort them to love and concord amongst each other, and charity to the poor. During the last nine days he seemed to be dying every moment, and the attendants wondered how it was possible that a frame so exhausted and so racked with pain could hold together. Then it was remembered that he had been used to pray that in his last sickness he might suffer pain as a penance for his sins, so that his life seemed to be prolonged in these fiery pains, in answer to his own prayers. As soon as a fit of pain had passed away and a short breathing time was allowed him he would smile faintly, and lift up his hands, as if to thank God. Once he said to those about him, " Oh ! if I could but speak, I could tell you of wondrous things which I have seen." It is probable that God, who had so often favoured him with visions, now deigned to console him with a foretaste of heavenly joys, even while he was lying in agony. On Lammas-day, when the Church celebrates the memory of St. Peter's miraculous delivery from prison, he was so visibly dying that he received the Body and Blood of Christ and the rite of extreme Unction. Yet for two days and two nights he lay in pain, hourly expecting death, and yet kept alive to suffer. About the dawn of day on the 3rd of August, the convent was summoned to be present at the death of their father, and he was placed on sackcloth to die, according to the rule of the order. When he heard the low chaunt of the psalms and litanies around him, he



opened his eyes and looked round upon them as if to thank them. He seemed so much revived that they retired; once again this scene had been renewed, when after sext, as the convent was sitting down to its mid-day meal, they were summoned for the last time. "There," says Josceline, "with the chaunts of his brethren sounding about him, this holy soul after being tried as in a fiery furnace with fevers and manifold pains, and purified as gold in the fire, quitted this mortal tabernacle of its spotless body. Thus did the holy father pass from the world to the Father, from faith to sight, from hope to joy, from the shadow to the reality, from darkness to light, from the toilsome race to the hard-won crown, from the misery of this present life to the everlasting glory of a life never to pass away."

Thirteen years after the death of the Saint, the stone under which the body lay, in the very place which he had pointed out, was raised by abbot Josceline, and his remains were found uncorrupt. Again the same thing was found forty-eight years after his death. Many miracles were done at his tomb, which now lies neglected and unknown among the ruins of his abbey. A stone indeed is pointed out by tradition in the choir, to which his remains may have been translated. Nothing, however, certain is known, except that his body will rise gloriously at the resurrection of the just.



THE LIFE OF  
**St. Robert.**<sup>1</sup>

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WHAT is meant by the word obedience, as applied to our blessed Lord, we cannot tell, still less can we conceive how, in consequence of His humiliation, He could be exalted. All that we know is, that for us He bowed Himself down to the death of the cross, in obedience to the will of the Father ; and that for our sakes He, in His human nature, was received up into glory, though His everlasting glory could neither grow nor decrease. His glory is represented as being the reward of His voluntary sufferings ; and yet, incomprehensible as it is, this is not a mere representation, but both the glory and the sufferings are real. And this, again, is the case with all members of His Church ; as His merits are imparted to them not by a nominal imputation, but by a real and ineffable union, so also the cross which they bear is not figurative, but a very crucifixion of body and soul. In proportion, too, as Christians are more saintly,

<sup>1</sup> This life of St. Robert is principally taken from a manuscript life of him in the British Museum, which contains a few particulars not in the Bollandists. It speaks of having heard things spoken of him by the old men in the Abbey, and also of a book preserved there called *Collectaneus Sti. Roberti*, containing his meditations and prayers, and also of the book of his miracles. Many miraculous stories are told of him in the life in the Bollandists.

that is, more Christian, they also partake more of the cross. They are not content with the narrow bounds of natural suffering, but they seek out for themselves, as it were, a supernatural cross, that they may learn to live above the flesh and to crucify it with their Lord. It is this inseparable connection between glory and suffering which makes the most contemplative Saints to be also the most austere. It is this that has driven holy monks and hermits into the wilderness; they durst not, without crucifying their bodies, give themselves up to the holy joys into which their love for Christ threw them, when they contemplated His mysteries. "There is no Thabor without Calvary," as it has been expressed; and "this is a fundamental law of Christian mysticism."

The first Cistercians were no exceptions to this rule, which is, in fact, the principle which gave life to all monastic orders, and which connects together ascetics in all ages, St. Anthony and St. Bruno, St. Benedict and St. Romuald. On the low, vine-clad plains of Burgundy St. Bernard renewed what St. Basil had begun in the solitudes of Pontus. In the wild forests and on the lonely mountains of the north of England the same scenes appeared as in the first ages were witnessed in the deserts of Egypt. And this was especially the case with the first generation of English Cistercians; from peculiar circumstances, they were distinguished by sterner features than those of France. There is little enough of sternness in the idea which we form of St. Bernard writing his sermons on the Canticles in the arbour of twisted flowers,<sup>1</sup> in the garden of Clairvaux; or in St. Basil's description of his solitude, and of the

<sup>2</sup> *Pisatiis floribus intextum. Vita Sti. Bern.*

clear river sweeping round his woody mountains which collected its waters into a clear basin like a lake, and then again narrowed into a river. But our first English Cistercians had little leisure for scenery. The colony sent to Rievaulx came over from France and found a home ready for them; but the first monks who broke away from a Benedictine abbey, as St. Stephen did from Molesme, had to endure a trial which it required superhuman energy to bear. Their history forms the principal portion of the very brief life of Robert of Newminster which remains to us.

Few, indeed, are the particulars which are related of him, except as far as he is connected with Fountains Abbey. He was born in the district of Craven, apparently at the village of Gargrave.<sup>3</sup> He went to the university of Paris, and his biographer appeals to a book on the Psalms, which he is said to have composed, as a proof of his progress in theology. He then was ordained priest to his native village at Gargrave. He next appears as a monk at Whitby. In the year 1132, however, news reached the monastery of a movement in the Benedictine order, which entirely altered Robert's plan of life; and we must transport the reader into the chapter-house of St. Mary's abbey at York, that he may see how the voice from Citeaux found an echo in England.

The abbey was rich and magnificent, but any one who entered it soon perceived that St. Benedict would hardly have known it for his. It was not that the monks were men of scandalous lives. "On the con-

<sup>3</sup> Ex provincia Eboracensi quæ Craven dicitur. Gargrave ubi natus fuerat. MS. The Church of St. Andrew of Gargrave was given in 1321 to the Abbey of Sallay by William Percy. Vide Dugdale.

trary," says the chronicle of Fountains, "they lived honestly, but they fell far short of the perfection enjoined by the rule." The abbot was a kind-hearted man, but he was old and ignorant, and the monks led an easy life. A noise of chattering and laughing might be heard all over the abbey; some indeed, kept aloof, and would go into the church to pray while others were idle. The greater part, after compline, instead of going to the dormitory, walked about, and, dividing into knots, talked about the news of the day. Thus there were two parties in the community; but the strict party were a very small minority, only thirteen monks. However, they had at their head Richard, the prior, and Gervase, the sub-prior, so they hoped that something might be done through them; and, on the eve of the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, he went with the sub-prior, to Godfrey, the abbot, and propounded to him his thoughts as to the lax state of the abbey. But the poor abbot trembled at the very notion of innovation. He said that the convent would have an ill name, that all the world lived as they lived, and that he did not see why they should affect singularity; in fine, it was impossible. Richard, however, stood his ground manfully; as for innovation, it was only going back to the rule of St. Benedict; and, as for impossibility, the monks of Clairvaux and Citeaux found it possible enough. The abbot put off his decision, and begged him to put down in writing what he wanted. By the time, however, that this was done, the other monks had heard of what was rumoured; "and," says the chronicle, "there arose a great tumult in the monastery." Richard, seeing that the case was hopeless, applied to Thurstan, archbishop of York, saying that they were threatened.

with excommunication by their brethren. They protested that all that they wanted was "to follow Christ, who was a poor man, in His voluntary poverty, and to bear Christ's cross on their bodies." The archbishop applied to abbot Godfrey; and the old abbot wept, and said that he would not oppose their holy resolution, but could do nothing without the chapter. So the archbishop promised to meet the chapter.

On the appointed day, Thurstan, with several grave and reverend ecclesiastics connected with the cathedral, went to St. Mary's abbey, to try to pacify it. When, however, they reached as far as the door of the chapterhouse, they were met by the abbot, who protested that the archbishop alone should enter, without the secular clerks who attended him. When Thurstan remonstrated, out rushed from the chapterhouse the whole convent, and with them a number of strange monks, Cluniacs and Benedictines, assembled for the occasion. Such an uproar ensued as St. Mary's abbey has never witnessed before or since. They roared, they bellowed, and they declared that they would rather suffer an interdict for an hundred years than yield an inch. Suddenly they shouted, "Seize them, seize them!" and then they attacked Richard and his friends, and would have torn them to pieces, if they had not clasped the archbishop's knees for shelter. Then they drove archbishop, monks, and clerks, altogether, pell-mell into the church, with cries of "Seize the rebels! seize the traitors!" So the archbishop quitted the monastery, and took with him the brethren thus forcibly ejected, being twelve priests and one sub-deacon, and lodged them in his house. Here they remained till Christmas day, when the archbishop took them with him to Ripon minster, and, in the midst of the

solemn services of the festival, he assigned them their habitation, of which they set out to take possession, after having elected Richard for their abbot.

This was what Robert heard at Whitby; he must also have been told that nothing could equal the desolation of the place or the hardships which, in that rugged season, they endured. We know nothing of the previous working of his mind, but that this did not deter him is quite clear, for he obtained leave from his abbot to join them, and set out to find their habitation, and a more desolate scene could hardly be imagined. It was on the banks of the Skeld, under a ridge of rocks, and surrounded by pathless woods, then in all the nakedness of winter. And where were the monks themselves? Under a broad elm, in the midst of the belt of rocks, they had made a hut with hurdles roofed with turf. Here they lived, in the midst of the terrible cold of winter; their very existence was a miracle, but it was still more wonderful how meditation, and the chaunting of psalms by night, and the regular hours, and the holy sacrifice of the mass, could go on regularly, almost in the open air, to the sound of the wind howling about them through the leafless trees, and of the hoarse roaring of the swollen Skeld. Robert's must have been a resolute heart, not to be appalled by such a scene as this; but he was supported by his resolution to suffer with Christ, so that the bitter cold, and the long fasts, and coarse food of the little community were a source of joy to him, because they united him to his Lord.

He found the brethren employed in hewing down trees to build a chapel. As for tilling their ground, that was out of the question at that time of the year; and they were supported solely by supplies which they ob-



tained from the Archbishop of York. It seems wonderful how human bodies could manage to pass the winter in such a solitude, and with so little shelter, but the grace of God supported them. "No sign of sadness," says the chronicle, "was seen among them; not a sound of murmuring, but all blessed God with entire fervour, poor in worldly goods, but strong in faith." After the winter was over, and the voice of spring was heard in their woods, they determined to send to Clairvaux that they might be affiliated to the Cistercian order. We may suppose with what joy the blessed St. Bernard received the two brethren whom they sent, and wrote to them a letter with his own hand, sending them an aged monk called Godfrey, to teach them Cistercian discipline. According to Godfrey's directions, they built their house, and ordered their whole life according to the institutes of Clairvaux. Very soon the spark which they had kindled spread in England, and ten novices appeared to share their hard life with them. Abbot Richard received them joyfully; but it was a great act of faith to receive them, for still they had no possessions of their own but what the archbishop of York gave them. For two years they struggled on, sometimes obliged to live on roots and on the leaves of trees, till they almost despaired, and Richard set out for Clairvaux to expose their distress to its holy abbot. St. Bernard assigned them a grange belonging to his abbey, for their support, but Richard on his return found that God had had compassion upon them, and had rewarded their faith by moving the heart of Hugh, the dean of York, to become a novice of the poor house of Fountains, and to give them all his wealth, so that the abbot when he returned, found plenty reigning in his monastery. He found also a library and the books of the Holy Scripture, which Hugh had given them.

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Years went on, and the community flourished more and more, till in the fifth year after their foundation, a noble baron, called Ralph de Merlay, offered to endow a Cistercian house if they would send a colony of White monks into his lands. Abbot Richard joyfully assented, and he appointed Robert to be the leader of the twelve brethren of the new house. "It was a beautiful place, pleasant with water, and very fair wood about it," and was called Newminster.

Of Robert's government of his abbey, such scanty records remain that it is impossible to form a connected history of it. As a proof of its flourishing condition, three colonies were sent from his abbey during his lifetime, Pipewell in 1143, Sallay and Roche about 1147. Further than this, only scattered notices are inserted, two of which are here put down, because they help to give a faint idea of the abbot, and because they have never been published elsewhere. One day, Abbot Richard wished to return from a grange, where he had been visiting the lay-brethren of the abbey; a great festival was approaching, and he wished to hurry back to Newminster. He had no palfrey to convey him back, so he called for a pack-horse which used to carry bread to the granges. He mounted his sorry steed, and pulled his cowl over his face, and began to pray and meditate as he was wont to do wherever he went. As he was riding along, he was roused from his meditation by a voice rudely asking him whether he had seen the lord abbot in the place which he had left. This was a nobleman who had come to the abbey on business, and had been directed to seek him at the grange. Seeing this shabby figure, the nobleman thought that it was some lay-brother. Robert did not choose to undeceive him, for he wished still to pass for a poor lay-brother, and so he shrewdly said, "when I

was last at the grange, the abbot was there." But the nobleman when he had looked further at the speaker's features, knew at once from his saintly face that the abbot himself was speaking to him, so he humbly got down from his fine horse, and made the abbot mount it, and when he had finished his business with him, he begged for his blessing and went away.

At another time a great trial befell Robert, one probably more harassing than all his bodily mortifications. He was accused to St. Bernard of misconduct in the government of his abbey, and it appears that the saint so far believed it that Robert was obliged to take a journey into France to clear himself. But when St. Bernard saw him and marked the angelic temper with which the abbot bore the humiliation, without speaking harshly of his accusers, he felt sure that he was innocent, and from that time loved him the more. During this journey he also saw Pope Eugenius,<sup>4</sup> and returned back to Newminster full of joy, for good had come out of evil; and it is especially recorded that he did not speak a word of reproach to his accusers when he returned.

It was in 1159 that this saint passed to his rest. He had been to visit his great friend, St. Godric, the holy hermit of Finchale, whom he used to consult in all spiritual matters. It was now fifty years since St. Godric had entered his hermitage; and though he was lying in extreme weakness on his bed from which he never rose, yet his mind rose above his body, and he was endowed with many supernatural gifts, so that he often knew of events which happened a great distance off as though he

<sup>4</sup> This fixes the date to 1147-8. William Bishop of Durham, who is said in the MS. to have given the lands of Walsingham to the abbey, is William of St. Barbara.

were present. It was a little before the feast of the Lord's Ascension that he quitted St. Godric to hasten back to his monastery, and the holy hermit told him at parting, that he should see his face no more. On the Saturday after the festival, he fell ill, and knew that he was to die. When he had received the Holy Sacrament, and was visibly dying, the older brethren of the monastery came to him, begging him to name as his successor the man whom he thought most fit. But the saint said, "I know well that ye will not follow my advice, but elect brother Walter," and so indeed it befell after his death. Soon after this he raised his hands to heaven, and prayed for his spiritual sons, and for his monastery, and then he passed away to the joys of heaven on the 7th of June, 1159. At the time that he gave up his soul into the hands of God, a vision appeared to St. Godric, which we will give in the words of the chronicle. "The man of God, Godric, saw while he was praying, an intense light penetrating into the darkness of the night, and two walls of brightness reaching from earth to heaven. Between these walls angels were flying up to heaven, bearing with songs of joy, the soul of abbot Robert, one on the right hand, the other on the left. The soul, as far as it could be seen, was like a globe of fire. As they were ascending, the enemy of the human race met them, but went back in confusion, for he could find nothing to lay hold of in him. And the servant of God saw the soul of his dear friend thus ascend to heaven, of which the gates were opened for him. And, lo! a voice was heard, repeating twice, 'Enter now, my friends.'"

The body of St. Robert was buried first in the chapter, and afterwards translated to the choir in consequence of the miracles which took place at his tomb.

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